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*The priest of Auvrigny, or, How a  
Christian avenges himself; and, ...*

Just-Jean-Etienne Roy



Roy

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THE  
PRIEST OF AUVRIGNY;

OR

## **HOW A CHRISTIAN AVENGES HIMSELF.**

## **AND**

# THE KING OF THE BEAN.

Jacques Jean Etienne Roy

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

MRS. MARY C. MONROE.

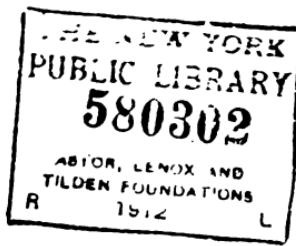
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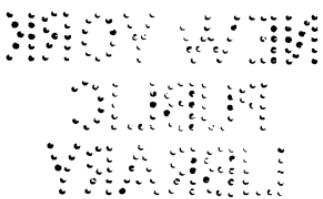
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## CHAPTER I.

### THE AUVRIGNY COUNTRY.

ON the western side of the Vosges, all that portion of country bordering on Lorraine and Champagne was covered, at the period our story commences, with vast forests, which have been, with the progress of time and the increase of population, of course considerably diminished in extent.

At that period, which was toward the beginning of the year 1788, the canton to which we refer, although designated by a variety of names, such as the Bois-des-Dames, the Bois-Touffu, the Forest of Mirecourt, the Valley of Berceville, the Oak Grove of Auvrigny, etc., formed but one vast range of forest country, twelve or fifteen square leagues in extent, interspersed with hills and dales, and watered by numerous small streams, which, uniting in the principal valley, called the Valley of Auvrigny, formed a small river known as the Argentine. This region was called the "Auvrigny Country."

It was inhabited by a somewhat numerous population, occupying several villages and hamlets, the principal of which were Maulincourt, Berceville, Mirecourt, and the small village of Auvrigny-le-Chateau, or simply Auvrigny. This village was, to a certain extent regarded as the most important place in the country, either because it was located in the centre, or more probably because it had been for so many years the residence of the powerful

lords of Auvrigny, whose castle crowned the hill at the foot of which the village was situated.

But for two centuries, this old feudal fortress had ceased to exist ; the ruins alone remained, standing out in wild and solitary grandeur, against the azure vault of heaven, attesting, by their imposing massiveness and proportions, the power and immense resources of the ancient barons by whom it had been erected. That power had itself proportionately decayed, and of all the domains and fiefs which they had formerly possessed, there now remained but a few farms, the Oak Grove of Auvrigny, the Forges of the same name, and the site occupied by the ruins of the old castle. These, however, altogether constituted a considerable fortune ; but the revenues having to pass through the hands of a register, an intendant, and a number of other subaltern agents, the greater portion was usually absorbed before reaching the hands of the proprietors.

However, the last representative of this ancient house, Duke d'Auvrigny, Count Apremont, Lieutenant-General of the King's army, and Governor of Barrows, possessing rich domains in other parts of France, and being married to an opulent Austrian heiress, who had come to France with the Queen Marie Antoinette, seemed but little concerned about the revenues received from this ancient inheritance of his ancestors. Far from oppressing his vassals and tenants, he, on the contrary, was always ready to listen to their complaints, and reduce their rents, on every occasion, when visiting the Auvrigny country, which he did, almost every year, during the hunting season. Besides this, none of the revenues of the estate were ever carried away : he employed them at one time in improving the roads conducting to the village ; at another, in

building a new covered market-house; or he dowered with generous marriage portions a number of poor young girls, or increased the revenue of the ancient Almonry founded by his ancestors.

This latter establishment deserves especial notice. It had been founded in the sixteenth century, by Count Cæsar d'Auvrigny, for the purpose of supporting a certain number of aged indigent men and superannuated workmen of the forge, which was established about the same period. It was what our modern theorists would call a "Workmen's Hospital." Thrice each day, the poor of the village presented themselves at the Almonry-gate to receive bread, soup, and cooked meats, or vegetables on fasting and days of abstinence. On certain occasions, as the principal feasts of the year, they were given, each, a piece of money. The servants of the castle, under the surveillance of the almoner, were intrusted with these distributions, and from this circumstance, the establishment received the name of "the Almonry."

After the castle had been demolished, and the lords ceased to reside at Auvrigny, the good work was nevertheless still continued, and the endowment constantly increased with the growth of the village. The lords of Auvrigny had no desire to rebuild a modern structure on the site of or beside the ancient fortress; on the contrary, they preferred the ruins should be preserved in solitary grandeur, as families of a noble race are accustomed to preserve the bruised and rusty shields and armor that once belonged to their illustrious ancestors. But, as the old chapel of the castle, which had served as parish church for the inhabitants of Auvrigny, then few in number, had been destroyed with the rest of the fortress, they had built on a declivity, in the vicinity of the castle, a parish

church and vicarage, besides erecting a large edifice destined for the new Almonry. The Sisters of Charity were intrusted with the care of the old invalids, to distribute alms to the indigent, and also to visit the poor and sick of the parish, and instruct the children. The parish priest naturally assumed the position of almoner, in the surveillance of the establishment.

To provide for repairs and other expenses of this house, the founders had appropriated a portion of the rents, which each one of their successors had increased, in proportion to its requirements ; and the actual duke had not been the least generous benefactor of this good work, by which the poor of the country had profited during a period of more than three hundred years.

When the revolution occurred, the rents were confiscated, and the building itself seized as government property. This benefaction, stolen from the people in the name of the people themselves, was sold at a merely nominal price during the Reign of Terror ; and when, as had been their custom, the poor presented themselves at the gate for their usual alms, the new purchaser, most excellent patriot and ardent democrat that he was, would coolly point to a placard, fixed on the principal gate, containing the following words printed in large characters :

“ By order of the Municipal Council of Auvrigny, mendicity is forbidden in this Parish.”

The whole was preceded by an indemnity heading as follows :

“ FRENCH REPUBLIC : *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—or DEATH !!* ”

The poor creatures, seeing this formidable announcement, passed on with heads bowed down, without daring to indulge in the slightest audible commentary or reflection.

The generosity and indulgence of the Auvrigny family had from time immemorial attached to them a people naturally good and grateful, and this affection had been extended equally toward the intermediaries intrusted with the distribution of their benefactions. The register, M. Planart, or, as the good people familiarly called him, "Father Planart," resided in the midst of them, as though surrounded by the most affectionate and devoted relatives and friends. It was the same with the Sisters of Charity, intrusted with the care of the Almonry; although the respect they felt for them was inspired as much by their simple and dignified manners as by the exemplary and saintly lives they led.

Among those also who enjoyed, in an especial manner, the universal affection and consideration of the inhabitants, we should not neglect to mention a personage of whom we have not yet spoken, but who is destined to occupy an important place in our narrative; this was the pastor of Auvrigny. He had no need of being the occasional dispenser of the good works of the Auvrigny family, in order to obtain the veneration and love of his parishioners; the sacred character with which he was invested, and the admirable manner in which he sustained it, being all-sufficient to establish him firmly in their "heart of hearts."

The people of this country had always been especially devoted to their religion, and continue to be so to this day, even after more than seventy years of revolution. It can be imagined with what profound veneration they regarded their priest, who was indeed a model of every virtue; who gave himself, unrestrictedly, to the care and instruction of his flock; consoling them in their sorrows and afflictions, and devoting every moment of his life to

their spiritual and temporal welfare. Such was the venerable Abbé Lefranc, who for fifteen years had been installed in the parish, first as curate, during five years, and then as rector after the death of the old pastor.

He was about forty years of age at the time our narrative commences, of medium height, but strong and robust, he was readily enabled to endure great fatigue, and even the severest hardships. It was not unusual, during the winter season, to meet him in the woods, often at night, on his way to visit the sick in the hamlets, or isolated habitations belonging to his parish. These journeys were almost always performed on foot, often in the most terrible weather, when he would return home through storm and tempest, drenched to the skin by the rain. But such hardships affected neither his health nor spirits; his frank and open countenance bore always a serene and unclouded expression, reflecting the calm of his conscience and the entire serenity of his soul. There were occasions, however, when that countenance was lighted up, and glowed with a celestial radiance, as when he proclaimed from the pulpit the grandeur and infinite goodness of God, and sought to inspire his auditors with gratitude and love for his benefits. There were also times when he assumed a character of extraordinary severity, and his eyes flashed fire, as when, for instance, he was impelled by his subject, or by some especial circumstance, to raise his voice in denunciation of the vices and immoralities of the age, and announce the hand of God uplifted and ready to descend in wrath upon the heads of the guilty offenders.

In former years, he had rarely ever entered upon discourses of this kind, as they were entirely uncalled for, and probably would not even have been comprehended; but of late, a number of individuals, strangers in the com-

munity, had commenced preaching the most pernicious doctrines, and to disseminate false principles and ideas that were destined to be the source of great trouble, and this condition of things of course aroused the good priest to earnest remonstrance and continued warning.

## CHAPTER II.

### IN WHICH REMI TOUSTAIN IS FIRST INTRODUCED.

A LARGE proportion of the inhabitants of the country were engaged in cultivating the soil ; the remainder were wood-cutters or miners. All were industrious, hard-working people, and secured by their labor, if not ease and luxury, at least sufficient to supply the wants of their families, and render them comfortable. If, by any unforeseen accident, they were compelled to discontinue work, or if unfavorable seasons rendered the crops insufficient, Providence, in the form of a Sister of Charity, or, more frequently, under that of the pastor of Auvrigny, came to their assistance, and they thanked God for the afflictions they had experienced.

There was no other industrial establishment in the country except the forge already mentioned. This consisted, in the beginning, of a large furnace intended for the purpose of fusing the iron ore so abundant in that country. Later, they had added one or two tilt-hammers, for transforming the metal into bars. These works gave employment to a great number of laborers, engaged either in extracting the ore from the mines or the interior work of the foundry. The wages of the workmen brought money into the country, besides the advantages and profits derived by those who carted the products of the foundry around, and sold them in the neighboring villages.

The foundry had been built on the right bank of the Argentine, a quarter of a league below the village of Auvrigny, which was constructed on the left of the river, at the foot of the hill on which stood the ancient castle. Gradually, the workmen employed in the forges had erected in the vicinity numerous habitations, which had ultimately grown into a village called Auvrigny-les-Forges, to distinguish it from the borough named Auvrigny-le-Chateau.

For many years, the most perfect unanimity had existed between these two sections of the parish. The workmen of Auvrigny-les-Forges came on Sunday to assist at the office of the parish church; and on Saturday, market-day, their wives carried the vegetables of their gardens, and other small wares they had to sell, and, in exchange, bought, either in the market or from the retailers in the village, such commodities as they needed in their households.

In the year 1784, the lessee of the Auvrigny forges, who had assumed the title of "Monsieur le Directeur," having obtained from the duke an emphyteutic\* lease of ninety-nine years, determined to make considerable additions to his foundry. He began by establishing new furnaces for the purpose of converting the ore into iron, by a new refining process; and was compelled, consequently, to employ strange workmen, men who were already skilled in this kind of work, with which the native operatives were entirely unacquainted. These recruits were brought principally from Upper Alsace, in the vicinity of Belfort, Montbéliard, and Audincourt.

The new colony, composed of thirty master-workmen,

\* An emphyteutic lease was one for a long term of years; the duration of these leases was never less than twenty nor more than ninety-nine years.

generally married and fathers of families, came with their wives and children to establish themselves at Auvrigny. Other individuals, relatives and friends of the first colony, afterward came and settled, although not employed by the director of the forges; but being engaged in small trades of different kinds, such as tailors, shoemakers, hatters, and even innkeepers, who, seeing their best customers leaving, determined to follow them into a country where, as dealers in their line were not numerous, they hoped to better their condition.

There were at Auvrigny-le-Chateau, in fact, but two tailors, three shoemakers, and one hatter; in the village of the forges, there were none at all. It is easily understood how a lively feeling of dissatisfaction should have arisen among those honest artisans on finding these strange competitors installed in their midst. This first grievance was not slow in being followed by many others. We shall not consume time, however, in enumerating them; but simply mention one of the principal causes of dissension between the village and the borough.

They very soon discovered that the new inhabitants of Auvrigny-les-Forges failed to assist regularly on Sundays at the services in the parish church; some of them never making their appearance at all, neither themselves nor their families. During the hours of public worship, these individuals frequented the inns newly established by their friends and acquaintances, and there entertained the young people, and often the old men of the country. This occasioned great scandal in the parish. The pastor was deeply grieved by such disorders, and endeavored at first, by gentle and persuasive means, to arrest the evil. But all his efforts proved futile. He then appealed to the magistrates commissioned by the civil law, and implored

them to enforce the statutes forbidding, under severe penalties, the innkeepers from opening their establishments during the hours of public worship, on festivals of obligation, and Sundays.

The first magistrate was Father Planart, the register, a man respectable, and respected by the whole parish. Entering fully into the feelings and intentions of the priest, he wished first to try conciliatory measures. He therefore summoned the innkeepers before him, who solemnly promised not to infringe the laws in future, on condition that no action should be taken against them for past misdemeanors. All pledged their words, and for two or three Sundays, strictly adhered to their obligation, but on the fourth, returned again, with renewed zeal, to their former violations of the law.

Father Planart was in despair. He dared not resort to severe measures, knowing he would encounter a powerful opposition, which might result in serious consequences. The second magistrate, Master Courlet, the notary, seeing the perplexity of his colleague, declared then that he would take charge of the affair. "Ah well!" he said, "just leave them to me, I will very soon have them all right."

Father Planart, desiring nothing better than to be relieved of the unhappy responsibility, readily consented, advising Master Courlet, however, to exercise great prudence in his undertaking. The notary promised, and accompanied by two of the game-keepers, who assumed the functions of sergeants or apparitors, he proceeded to the principal alehouse of the forges.

When the public functionary arrived with his escort, he found the house open, and heard in a back room the sound of numerous voices singing in a measured

tone, words of which he could not distinguish the meaning.

"How is this, Monsieur Toustain?" he said, addressing the innkeeper, who came to meet him, making the most profound salutations, with which it was quite perceptible there was mingled more irony than respect. "Is this the way you keep the promises you have made to the first magistrate?"

"I do not see, sir, in what manner I have broken my promises."

"What! were you not pledged to keep your house closed on Sundays and festivals during the church services? And, notwithstanding, at the hour of celebrating High Mass, your doors are open, and tipplers are admitted, whose songs and carousals can be heard out in the streets!"

"I beg your pardon, there is a great mistake here, sir. I have promised Monsieur Planart not to open my establishment on Sundays to drinkers, during the church service, and I have kept my word. These are not topers whom I have admitted at that hour at all, but good, honest Christians, who come here to worship God after their own fashion, and according to their own conscience."

"What, sir, what!" cried Monsieur Courlet, much exasperated, "you would add irony, I should almost say insult, to your disobedience! I shall proceed on the spot to issue a verbal process, and compel you to evacuate your house, sir!"

"You have entirely misconstrued my language," replied the innkeeper, with the greatest coolness; "there was neither irony nor insult intended by my words. The persons who assemble here, men, women, and children, are, as you know, natives of the province of Montbéliard, a Pro-

testant country. They have been born and raised in that religion, and as there is neither Protestant church nor minister here, they have chosen to assemble at my house on Sundays, to unite in the exercise of their religious worship. The singing you have heard just now, and mistook for songs of revelry, was only the French hymns and psalms they chant in their meetings. At this moment, the hymns have ceased, while one of the congregation, in the absence of a minister, reads to them a chapter from the Bible. If you wish to convince yourself of the truth of what I say, you can go into the room where they are holding their meeting."

Saying this, he opened wide a door communicating with the apartment, and the magistrate perceived a number of persons, who were listening, or appeared to be listening, attentively to an individual he could not see, but whom he heard reading aloud some verses from a French Bible.

The poor notary was so entirely unprepared for this unparalleled explanation, that he stood gazing as if stupefied; he could not be induced to enter the place of meeting, but making a sign to Toussaint to close the door, and having recovered somewhat from his astonishment, said in a voice trembling with emotion, "I perceive, sir, that these are not revelers whom you are entertaining at present; but you are none the less acting in violation of the laws of the kingdom, which forbids, under very severe penalties, these Protestant assemblages."

"But do you not know, sir, those laws have fallen into disuse, and especially in that province recently united to France, and surrounded by Protestant countries? Moreover, it was on this condition the director of the forges engaged his workmen, and if, as magistrate, you have any

observations to make on the legality of these assemblages, it is to him, and not to me, you should address yourself, sir."

Master Courlet did not care to come in contact with the director of the forges, a haughty, imperious man, who, although but a simple commoner, was far more lofty and unapproachable than the duke himself, whose tenant he was. On the other hand, the notary was sufficiently well acquainted with the spirit of the age, and the prevailing tendencies of public opinion, to understand the necessity of acting with the most consummate prudence, without which they would not fail to raise the cry of intolerance and religious persecution. He resolved, therefore, to confer with the priest and the first magistrate, and advise with them upon what was best to be done. At the same time, before returning, he hoped to find some means of making his visit prove not altogether fruitless; he therefore again addressed himself to Toustant, and in a paternal and most persuasive manner said to him, " You are yet very young, my dear Toustant, and it pains me to see that you have engaged in so bad a cause. In whatever way we view this matter, it is still contravention of the laws, and places you in a very bad light, a young man recently established among us, but whom we would like to regard as an honorable citizen, and more especially since you have married into this honorable family of Blagny."

" I can not see, sir," replied Toustant, " in what I am to blame for receiving into my house people who come there to worship God."

" Do not speak of sacred things in that manner; it is indeed almost blasphemous!" cried the notary. " Can you, for one moment, place any confidence in the piety of people who select a public-house for their religious as-

semblies, and, furthermore, the house of a man not of their own persuasion? for you are not a Protestant. It is impossible; for, if so, your father-in-law, most excellent Catholic as I have known him for more than thirty years, would never have given you his daughter in marriage."

"No, I am not a Protestant."

"Well, then, think of what scandal it will cause in the parish when they see a Catholic, connected with a good Catholic family, as you are by your wife, making a Protestant meeting-place of his house! Am I not fully justified in saying you have engaged in a bad cause? And now, my advice to you, not as a magistrate, but as a friend, a father, is, to permit no more assemblages of this kind in your house. They would scarcely be tolerated in the house of a Protestant, and in that of a Catholic will surely never be suffered."

"But, sir," replied Toustain, after reflecting a moment, "I have told you, it is true, that I was not a Protestant, but I have not meant by that to say I was a Catholic."

"What! what!" cried Courlet, regarding his interlocutor with a bewildered air, "you are not a Catholic; you are a Jew then, I suppose?"

"I am no more a Jew than a Catholic or a Protestant, an Anabaptist or a Mohammedan, or a——"

"Ah! unhappy man! of what religion are you then?" sorrowfully cried the notary, interrupting him.

"None at all," answered Toustain coldly; "or, rather, I believe in the religion of nature, that which has been taught us by the wise men of these latter days, at the head of whom I place the great philosopher of Geneva."

"You spoke truly at first, when you said you had no religion; it was useless to have taken it back. This pretended system of which you speak is no religion at all. I

pity you, my poor boy, and grieve to see one so young imbued with such pernicious sentiments. And I pity France, grieve to see such doctrines spreading among all classes of society ! What a sad future all this is preparing for us!"

"Say, rather, what a glorious future of regeneration and happiness."

"Come, let us go," answered the notary, more and more disconcerted. "I see with regret we shall not be listened to, nor our counsels heeded. Let me say to you, however, young man, that the future which you so confidently invoke will be better able than all my arguments to convince you of your errors." Saying this, he retired with his guards of honor, and returned in sadness to his abode.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CONTAINING SOME BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS CONCERNING REMI TOUSTAIN.

THE astonishment and grief of the good priest may be imagined, on learning from Monsieur Courlet the result of his mission. He already mistrusted the existence of the malady, but had no suspicion either of its extent or gravity ; and in the actual condition of things, what remedy could be effectually applied ? France was agitated throughout her entire extent by a subterraneous convulsion, similar to those which precede a volcanic eruption. Nothing was talked of but reforming abuses, and establishing liberal governments ; they attacked the privileges of the clergy, the nobility, and the crown ; many hoped and waited for the realization of the benefits to result from this work of regeneration ; others, more cautious and discerning, trembled at the thought of laying violent hands on a social edifice, demolishing it from roof to foundation, and, in its stead, erecting but a pile of ruins. Others still, and of this number was the venerable Abbé Lefranc, believed they should, above all things, invoke, by ardent prayer, the protection of God, and commit the future to his divine providence. He believed that, in his character as minister of God, his duty was to devote himself entirely to the salvation of his flock ; and if his efforts were ineffectual in preserving *all* from the contagion, he would devote himself more entirely to those who remained un-

contaminated and faithful. It is thus, in case of great conflagrations, buildings that have already taken fire must be given up to destruction, in order to save the remainder, and arrest the spread of the flames.

It was not that he had any thing to fear from the religious propaganda these newly established Protestants might erect in his parish. He knew perfectly well that none of his parishioners, even those who were most luke-warm in the practice of their religion, would ever dream of embracing any other. He was also convinced, on the other hand, that these same Protestants cared very little about making proselytes. The greater number of them were no more attached to their own religion than Toustain was to his, and their pretended preaching on Sundays at his house was but a farce, gotten up that they might assemble more unrestrictedly, in order to occupy themselves with other matters than those appertaining to religion.

But that which was really to be dreaded was the sarcasm constantly directed against the Church, the ridicule pointed at those who practiced their duties, the railleries cast at the young of both sexes, who exhibited any sentiments of piety, or refused to join in such pastimes and amusements as were forbidden by the Church.

The influence exercised over weak souls, by human respect, is but too well understood. Thus, many young people of the village permitted themselves to be ensnared, and drawn off by the counsel and pernicious example of their young companions; they commenced frequenting the alehouses of the Forges, and the company of men destitute of principle or morals. Infamous discourses that outraged morality, modesty, and religion, caused them, at first, to blush; little by little, however, their ears became

familiarized with these outrages, and soon they were freely repeating them. Very soon, these same young people, formerly models of piety, had gradually ceased frequenting the church and the sacraments, and some even carried their cynicism so far as to answer those who met them on Sundays, passing by the church, and asked them where they were going—"We are going," they would sneeringly reply, "to hear mass at Toustain's, at four cents a bottle."

It was against such disorders the priest directed all his zeal; it was to prevent similar desertions from his little band that he employed a degree of energy so extraordinary as to appear wonderful in one of such habitual calmness of character and gentle serenity of expression and disposition.

Unhappily, his exhortations did not often succeed in bringing back those who had been led astray. The genius of evil had also an apostle, none the less zealous, in the person of Toustain; and the sensual doctrines preached by the innkeeper were better adapted to the inclinations and tastes of the young people than the pure but severe morality taught by the curate of Auvrigny. But it is time to introduce this personage to our readers, as he will be found to play an important part in our narrative.

Remi Toustain was born in the vicinity of Belfort. His father had no permanent domicile, but followed the profession of an itinerant merchant or peddler, traveling around with his cart-load of merchandise, to the various fairs and markets in Upper Alsace and a portion of Lorraine. It was during one of these excursions that Remi was born. His infancy and part of his youth were spent in this nomadic style of life. When he had attained his fifteenth year, his father made a little knapsack, which

he strapped across his shoulders, and sent him forth to seek his fortune.

For two years, Remi followed the occupation of peddler; but either from want of energy or having no taste for such traffic, he was not successful. He then associated himself with a band of smugglers, who are always numerous near the frontier. This adventurous and exciting life pleased him much better than the monotonous existence of a peddler, to say nothing of the profits he acquired, which were considerable; but at the end of six months, the band to which he belonged was attacked by a force of custom-house officers, and entirely dispersed. Remi succeeded in escaping and getting out of the country. He found himself in a strange land, secure from the officers of the law, but not exempt from misery and starvation. Stripped of all resources, there was no alternative left him but to enlist as a soldier in a foreign regiment, engaged in the service of some petty German prince. It was not long before he became disgusted with this new calling, and one fine morning, or rather one beautiful night, while his regiment was encamped in a village on the right bank of the Rhine, he swam the river, and gained the opposite shore belonging to Switzerland.

Arriving at Berne, he met with a young French lord, who was traveling for pleasure and instruction. Remi related his adventures to him; the young lord listened with interest, and offered to take him into his service. This situation had but little attraction for one who, above all things, enjoyed his personal freedom and independence; but finding himself in a condition that left him no choice, he was compelled to accept the situation. His master, Count de B—, was a fanatical admirer of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who had, at that time, so many admir-

ers among the upper classes of society. Remi Toussaint completed in this school the style of education whose first principles had been imbibed during the early years of his vagabond existence. He read, during his sojourn with the count, all the works of the Geneva philosopher, and other *savants* of that period, and often listened to the able and instructive commentaries of his master on these edifying works.

Having traveled through Switzerland, and visited Geneva and Ferney as places of pilgrimage, the count returned to Paris. There, Remi heard of his father's death, and there being four children, he left the service of his master, to return and look after his share of the paternal inheritance.

The settlement ended, his portion was found to be about eight thousand five hundred livres, which to Remi seemed a small fortune. His elder brother proposed they should form a co-partnership, and continue the business of their father; but Remi had other intentions, and declined. His brother then paid him the amount due him in specie, except fifteen hundred francs, which he gave him in bills to collect on solvent persons in the vicinity of Montbéliard and the Auvrigny country.

Remi accepted these accounts as equivalent to gold, and at once set out to collect them. One of the largest was held on a farmer of Blagny, and it was on going there for the purpose of collecting, that Toussaint became acquainted with the farmer's daughter. She pleased him; he demanded her hand in marriage, and the good farmer could not refuse his daughter to a young man who wore such fine clothes, had a purse well filled, and possessed so smooth and oily a tongue.

After the marriage, the farmer proposed that his son-

in-law should join him in working the farm ; but Toustain had no more taste for agriculture than trade ; however, he dared not peremptorily refuse, and said he would reflect on the proposition. Meanwhile, he remained on the farm, spent all his time in hunting, bringing in every night quantities of game ; for the country was abundantly supplied, and Toustain a most expert marksman.

But the game-keepers very soon discovered the devastation caused by this new-comer. Out of regard for the father-in-law of Toustain, they refrained from resorting to legal measures ; but they advised the good man that if his son continued to commit depredations, they would be forced to prosecute him. Toustain only laughed at their threats, and refused to listen to the advice of his father-in-law ; but yielding to the prayers and tears of his wife, he at length consented to deny himself, for a few days at least, the pleasures of the chase.

Just at this time, he heard of the arrival at Auvrigny of the new colony of workmen. Several of them he knew, having encountered them during his peregrinations through the country as peddler. He went to see them, was well received, and the idea then occurred of establishing himself at Auvrigny, and opening a public-house. For four thousand francs, he purchased a pretty little house and garden ; with his surplus money, he furnished his wine-cellar, and procured a sufficient quantity of necessary household furniture for carrying on his new profession. His wife was placed in charge of the domestic and culinary department, while the surveillance of the liquor establishment devolved on himself.

Toustain was then scarcely twenty-four years of age. He was of medium height, but finely proportioned ; his face, when he was pleased, was sufficiently agreeable in its

expression, but when contradicted or in a bad humor, his eyebrows were immediately contracted, and his aspect became singularly hard and repulsive. As he advanced in life, his countenance assumed by degrees and was stamped by this characteristic expression ; but at the period we write, he still retained an expression of good-humor and the cheerfulness of youth—not, it is true, of that ingenuous frankness and innocent gayety belonging to this most joyous period of existence, before the conscience has been troubled, or the soul become a prey to the vexatious trials and harassing deceptions which, later in life, inevitably assail it. The cheerfulness of Toustain was always more or less sarcastic ; his most innocent pleasantries bore always some hidden sting, had always something to wound ; and when his sarcastic railleries against religion, the clergy, or the nobility had excited the applause of his auditors, they beheld him indulging apparently in a hearty laugh, when in reality that laugh was but a cold and forced mechanical effort, scarcely concealing the bitterness of the heart that prompted it.

In a short time, Remi became the oracle of the village of the Forges, and his house the most frequented in the country. It can not be said the man was loved, for his amiable qualities were not sufficient to attract sympathy or inspire affection ; but it afforded amusement to many who listened to his cutting observations, or the more or less pointed sallies of his keen wit ; whilst others joined in the applause through fear of becoming themselves the butt of his sarcasms. Besides, he possessed that physical superiority which eminently fitted him for exercising a powerful ascendancy over the vulgar crowd. Endowed with an unusual degree of muscular strength, he was well skilled in all kinds of games and exploits, managing the

sword and sabre with the dexterity of a fencing-master, and could readily bring down a swallow on the wing with his rifle.

After establishing himself at Auvrigny, he resumed his old habit of hunting, or rather of poaching, in the surrounding forests. He thus constantly supplied his table with game, and this was another attraction for his guests, always sure of finding in his house very rare and good living. The gamekeepers of the duke were at first disposed to prevent these depredations; but Toustain knew so well how to manage his schemes, that they were never able to detect him in the act; and, moreover, they were obliged to proceed with a great deal of prudence and caution in dealing with a man of such violent character as he was known to be, and who, upon the slightest provocation, threatened to use his gun. But they were not long compelled to exercise this surveillance, as the game laws were soon after abolished, and Toustain was able to give himself up without restraint to the enjoyment of his favorite pastime.

It can readily be conceived with what enthusiasm, or rather with what perfect frenzy, a man like this would welcome the first indications and movements tending toward revolution. How entirely he was disposed to applaud and encourage, and even take part in its excesses, we can judge later, after having seen him engaged in the work.

We are, however, bound, in order to complete the portrait of Remi Toustain (a portrait little flattered until now), to add, in justice to this man, that, in spite of his faults and vices, he was not entirely destitute of good qualities; it can even be affirmed that, on searching into the recesses of his character, there was to be discovered more than one good quality truly remarkable. For in-

stance, although he never pardoned an insult, and cherished an implacable hatred against those whom he considered his enemies, yet, on the other hand, he never forgot a favor received, and was capable of carrying his acknowledgments and gratitude to the extent of serious self-sacrifice. If he defrauded the government without hesitation ; if without scruple he appropriated the game that fell into his nets or was brought down by his gun, we must not hasten to the conclusion that he was lost to all sense of honor and integrity.

According to his ideas (and, unfortunately, such opinions are but too commonly held), that which belonged to the government belonged to every body, and every body had an equal claim upon it. As to the game, that belonged to nobody but the hunter, who by ruse or force might make himself its master. But aside from this style of reasoning, upon which we must unhesitatingly pronounce condemnation, there was never the slightest reproach uttered against the honesty of Toustain. During the revolution, at a period when he was employed in the most responsible positions, he was never known to abuse (as so many others did) the trust confided to him, or to appropriate valuables over which he had most absolute control. However, this is, as we say, but a vulgar merit ; but they relate of him, besides, many acts truly honorable—such among others, as the following :

One day, he found, in the forest, a purse of gold, that had been lost by one of the horse-guards who had been most bitter and unrelenting in his endeavors to detect and arrest him. The idea never once occurred to him of appropriating this money, but he immediately hurried to return it, through another person, to the guard, with the express understanding that he was not to be known as the

finder. "I do not want him," he said, "to suppose I have hoped or intended by this act of restitution to gain his good-will."

Finally, as a last commendable trait of character, we will say that Toustain proved himself, to a certain extent, a good husband and father; that he cherished for his wife and children a sincere and devoted, although not an enlightened affection. From all that has been said of his character, we must come to the conclusion that had this man received the benefits of a good education—if, above all, his soul had been enlightened by the truths of religion, and his heart influenced by the sentiments religion inspires, he would have been inclined toward the paths of rectitude and virtue, with the same untiring energy and determination which, impelled by the influence of his bad passions, he employed in the opposite direction for the promotion of vice and disorder.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MONSIEUR GROSPIN.

WHILST the revolutionary tempest was gathering for the destruction of France, the village of the Forges, in consequence of the elements composing its population, took an active part in the general agitation. The rivalry which had for some years existed between the two sections of the parish found a new aliment in the political and religious discussions engendered by the unhappy times. At first, the inhabitants of the Forges gave, in derision, the name of *Châtelaines*, or "lords of the castle," to those of Auvrigny-le-Chateau, and they, in return, bestowed on their neighbors of the Forges the flattering appellation of *Mache-fer*, or "dross iron." But very soon these epithets were superseded by the title of "Aristocrats," bestowed on the former by the latter, who loudly proclaimed themselves the true and only "democrats" in the country. The truth is, neither party distinctly comprehended the value of these expressions, nor were they understood by the greater number of those who used them, and who often applied them in the most absurd manner. But eventually, it was these terms of ridicule and raillery that served, in time of civil discord and disorder, to distinguish parties, to stir up strife and hatred, to excite and urge on to deeds of revenge, and the commission of those shocking crimes at which humanity revolts, and which are a disgrace and foul blot upon any age.

The unfortunate inhabitants of the village of Auvrigny were often insulted and threatened by their neighbors ; sometimes quarrels, resulting in blows, broke out among the young men, but owing to the kindly intervention of the priest, of Father Planart, and other prominent individuals of the parish, they resulted in nothing serious, and for some time ceased altogether. Toustain also, whose house had become a veritable club-room, and whom all the so-called democrats regarded as their leader, had recommended moderation in the conduct of his followers. "Of what use are these quarrels and insults?" he said to them. "Have a little patience, citizens ; some day, we will be their masters, and have it all our own way ; then none will dare to resist us, and we will wipe out the last trace of despotism, feudalism, and superstition."

"Yes, but suppose they take it into their heads to resist us ?" suggested a gigantic blacksmith, a veritable cyclops, with brawny arms, an unshorn beard, and bristling hair. "It would be necessary then to fight a little, to strike them down," he added, raising in the air an enormous hammer, such as blacksmiths use in striking the anvil, and which seemed to possess no more weight in his hand than a light cane or an ordinary walking-stick.

"If they resist," replied Toustain, with a confident air, "the people will only have to show themselves in their real strength and power, and they will be instantly subjugated. But as I have often told you, I do not like violence, nor blood uselessly shed. Our great and glorious revolution will accomplish itself, I hope, without excesses. It has not as many enemies as you imagine ; a goodly number of those calling themselves Aristocrats are such neither by birth, fortune, nor position ; they only retain, from force of habit, a remnant of affection for their old masters—

that is to say, for the nobility and the priests. As for these last, *they* are the implacable enemies of the revolution, and the people should strike them down without mercy. Then, those who belong to their party will hasten to join our ranks, and the people, who are always magnanimous, will receive them as brothers. I know that in some places they have already burned convents, castles, and the farm-houses dependent upon them ; that they have murdered the guards, and the servants who would have defended their masters' property ; but this is all wrong. It is not necessary, in my opinion, to destroy either convents or castles, but to make them subservient rather to the will of the people ; it is not necessary to kill the poor devils who fight, because they are paid for it, but to come down without mercy on those who pay them their wages. In a word, if we should have a civil war, there is a very simple way of reducing it to the most simple terms, or rather an infallible way of preventing it from spreading ; that is, to fire two broadsides in each village—one at the lords, the other at the priests."

It will be seen from this that Citizen Toussaint was a very *moderate* man. His auditors were convinced by his reasoning, and in imitation of his moderation, they agreed to let the "Aristocrats" of Auvrigny remain undisturbed until the time should arrive for the people to show themselves "in their power and in their might."

The blacksmith alone, as he strode away, muttered through his clenched teeth, "I should be glad, nevertheless, to strike down a few, I should !" And he illustrated his protestation by a violent stroke of his hammer that pulverized an enormous stone lying by the roadside.

Another personage whom we have as yet but casually mentioned, but whom it is time to introduce, had also

used his influence to establish quiet in the country. This man was Master Grospin, superintendent or director of the Auvrigny forges, and who had held the position, since the last lease he had obtained from the duke, of master of the establishment. Grospin was an experienced and skillful manufacturer, an intelligent, industrious man. Since he had taken control of the Auvrigny forges, they had prospered in a remarkable manner, and his own fortune had made the same progression. A simple clerk formerly, under the old director, he had distinguished himself by his capability, and on the death of his patron, Father Planart recommended him to the duke as being entirely competent to succeed him. The recommendation of the register-general had been supported by that of the priest, who also testified to the young man's good character and religious principles.

Once at the head of the establishment, Grospin's first effort was to gain the favor of the duke; he consequently placed himself in direct business relations with him, without reference to the usual intermedium of the register. He was more readily successful in this, because the duke was always pleased to see the persons attached to his service prospering, and Father Planart, far from taking offense at his course, favored these attempts himself, only seeing, in the simplicity and goodness of his heart, an opportunity of being relieved of an excess of work and responsibility. He had consequently favored Grospin, who always managed to keep in the good graces of the register, the priest, and the principal personages of the village.

But as soon as he obtained his emphyteutic lease, he seemed to consider himself the owner of the foundry, and no more bound to render the usual deference and respect

toward his old superiors. He gave no occasion for an open rupture, or direct remonstrance, it being one of his principles to fall out with nobody ; but he worked henceforth to accomplish his own personal ends, without reference to what would suit their convenience, or meet their approval. Thus it was, when he engaged new workmen for the forges, he considered it all-sufficient to be assured of their skill and capacity, without inquiring about their morals or religion ; and when the priest and Father Plannart ventured some suggestions on the subject, he contented him with the reply :

"And what would you expect me to do ? I have found it impossible to make other arrangements ; I was absolutely compelled to have workmen to keep my foundry going. If you can supply me with others equally as capable, who are Catholics, I ask nothing better than to employ them ; in the mean time, I shall be obliged to keep those I have already engaged."

Monsieur Grosclin was one of those men who, finding themselves on the road to fortune, determine at all hazards to successfully attain the goal. He would permit neither religious nor political convictions to stand in his way. Money was his god ; the best party, in his estimation, was the one that could be made most subservient to his interests. Therefore, we shall find him an ardent patriot in '89, an enthusiastic Jacobin in '93, a moderate democrat after the 9th Thermidor, a devoted Bonapartist after the 18th Brumaire, a servile courtier of the Emperor Napoleon, and, finally, an ultra-royalist after the Restoration. If he has not changed again since, it is because he died before the present date, 1830.

He had a peculiar faculty for foreseeing the moment when one party would lose power, and another be invest-

ed with the mantle of authority. With an admirable shrewdness, he abandoned the first when its downfall became inevitable, and identified himself with the second just at the propitious moment for sharing in its triumphs.

Thus, when the popular movement was planned for 1788 and '89, he immediately comprehended its entire portent, and without coming to an open rupture, as we have said, with his old friends, he sought to conciliate new ones among that class which, according to his views, would very soon become the dominant party. He found no difficulty in at once gaining over the workmen, even without increasing their wages, by simply familiarizing himself with and treating them, to some extent, more like companions than inferiors. On discovering the influence exercised by Toussaint, he disdained not to seek the acquaintance of the innkeeper, and endeavored to obtain the confidence of a man who enjoyed so powerful an ascendancy, not only over the workmen of the forges, but also over the larger portion of the entire population of the country. Toussaint was flattered by these advances, and delighted to see the director of a grand-duke's forges embracing so warmly the popular cause.

There was one particular circumstance also that tended to cement this friendly alliance. Although in the lease contracted between Grospin and the Duke d'Auvrigny, the latter had reserved the rights of the chase in the forests, destined to furnish wood for the furnaces of the forge, yet he had, by an exceptional tolerance, given verbal permission to Grospin, and Grospin alone, to sometimes, and only at certain seasons, hunt in those woods; but these restrictions had never been observed, and after Grospin became director, he easily arranged it with the keepers, who allowed him to hunt when and where he

pleased. But the more they relaxed in their duty toward him, the more severity they exercised toward the small poachers who ventured to bag a hare or net a partridge. Toustain, in the beginning of his sojourn at Auvrigny, had been arrested by the forest-keepers for several misdemeanors of this kind ; but Grospin interceded warmly in his behalf; consequently, the penalty was not only remitted for the crimes, but the master of the forges at length obtained for Toustain the same privilege that he himself enjoyed in the entire forest belonging to the foundry.

Gratitude, as we have seen, was one of Toustain's redeeming qualities. He became from that time entirely devoted to Grospin, and the latter was enabled later to skillfully take advantage of this devotion.

When the constitutional assembly had organized France into departments, districts, and municipalities, Auvrigny became the chief town in the canton of his district. Grospin aspired to the office of Mayor ; he confided his project to Toustain, who applauded, and gave it his entire approval. Immediately, our innkeeper commenced the campaign, and managed so skillfully his electioneering affairs (at this time still an entirely new thing) as to obtain for the master of the forges almost the entire vote, even those of the royalists and aristocrats. The latter, in fact, having no hope of electing one of their own party, had united their suffrages on the candidate whom they regarded as the most moderate of the opposition. In this instance, their expectations were not disappointed, for Grospin, if not by nature and from virtuous motives, inclined to moderation, at least, from considerations of self-interest, continued always to remain very conservative ; and one of his first acts, on assuming the position of Mayor, was, as we have seen, to counsel moderation, and endea-

vor to calm the more violent and impetuous among his adherents.

Grospin, out of gratitude for Toustant's services, made him his deputy; which of course augmented still more the attachment of the latter for the master of the forges. Thus the most perfect harmony existed from the beginning between these two municipal functionaries.

## CHAPTER V.

### AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

EARLY in the month of February, 1792, Father Planart and his friend Monsieur Courlet, according to their usual time-honored custom, came to pass the evening with the priest. For many years, these reunions had taken place, two or three evenings of each week, beginning with the Christmas festivals and continuing until Lent. The guests had formerly been much more numerous, and certainly more gay and cheerful, although composed entirely of men of mature age, selected from among the most prominent residents of the parish. The good priest called these reunions his "family councils," and he really presided over them like a father in the midst of his children, discussing with them the interests of the community, the improvements to be made, and the want and misery to be relieved. Many salutary measures were enacted in these assemblies, entirely unofficial; many reforms were effected, and much suffering alleviated. All was done quietly, and without ostentatious display, in the midst of familiar conversations, and even while permitting the occasional indulgence of innocent pleasantries.

But for some time these social gatherings had been reduced in number to three or four persons, among whom, beside the two individuals already mentioned, were included the parish physician and an old officer, a knight of St.

Louis, who had formerly served in a regiment of which the Duke d'Auvrigny was colonel, and who had taken up his abode here after being wounded at the battle of Fontenoy. However, the doctor and the old soldier often failed to make their appearance at the reunions—the one on account of his patients, and the other because of his rheumatic pains.

On this particular evening, there were only three present—the priest, Father Planart, and Monsieur Courlet. They conversed sorrowfully, as was their custom, on the events of the times; indeed, throughout the borders of France, in the great cities, as well as in the most isolated and obscure hamlet, there was little else discussed.

"You were entirely correct, reverend sir," said Father Planart, sighing deeply, "when you predicted that two years would not bring us to the end of our difficulties, and that the revolution would only end after every thing had been destroyed."

"Have you heard any recent news?" inquired Monsieur Courlet, anxiously.

"Only that the National Assembly has pronounced a decree sequestrating the entire property of absentees. I have been notified to-day to pay immediately into the hands of the district receiver all moneys belonging to the estate of the late Duke d'Auvrigny, and that I shall likewise deposit there all that I may receive in future from the same source."

"This decree does not astonish me, my dear Planart," said the priest; "it could only have been expected after that of the 9th of last November, ordering the same measure with regard to the property of the French princes who are abroad. Moreover, I believe it will not stop

here; this is only an introduction to the confiscation act that will bring these same estates to sale."

"It can not be possible!" cried Courlet. "And who would become the purchasers?"

"It is as possible," calmly replied the priest, "as for them to have sold the church property. The government had no more right to seize on that than on the estates belonging to the nobility; it has been done, however, and people have been found to buy."

"That is but too true," replied Father Planart, sadly. "My God! my God! upon what times we have fallen! Can it be possible I have lived to this age to witness such outrages!"

"But how are our poor exiled noblemen going to subsist among strangers," demanded Monsieur Courlet, "since their incomes have been cut off?"

"True," said Planart; "they are, however, placed in no worse condition than yourself, reverend sir, from whom they have taken the tithes, sold the property belonging to the vicarage, and now threaten you with still more barbarous treatment if you refuse to take the oath to the civil law of the clergy."

"*If I refuse!*" quickly replied the priest. "It is only by accident, I am sure, that you have implied the slightest doubt as to the line of conduct I shall follow in that matter."

"I beg your pardon, reverend father," replied Planart, with some hesitation. "It is because I have so often heard you say we should submit with resignation to the established powers, since they only exist by the permission or through the will of God, and that to resist them would be in some measure to resist the will of God himself. Then, I supposed the National Assembly, having passed the

'civil law of the clergy,' and the king having sanctioned that law, you would be compelled to submit, just as we shall have to obey, as you have said, the other laws of the Assembly."

"And you, Monsieur le Tabellion—oh ! pardon me, Monsieur le Notary,\* I always forget you wear now this new title," said the priest smiling,—“are you of the same opinion as your friend Planart ?”

“Upon my word, I must confess that I am effectively of his opinion, and that a goodly number of most respectable ecclesiastics also entertain the same views—for instance, the parish priests of Mirecourt, Berceville, Châtenay, Longpernier, and a great many others, to say nothing of a large number of monks, who have all taken the oath.”

The worthy priest smiled as he listened to the observations of Father Planart ; but the notary's words evidently produced a painful impression. He sat for some moments in silence, then, elevating his voice, he said with a profound sigh, “Alas ! all this is but too true ! O my friends !” he added after another pause, “it is but too apparent that we are threatened with one of the greatest evils that can befall the Church—a schism ! And this I have foreseen since the National Assembly, in enacting its laws, has undertaken to enact one for the benefit of the clergy, as if the Catholic clergy had not been established for centuries, and governed by the sole authority having power to govern them—the Church ! I do not wish, my friends, to enter upon a theological dissertation—that

\* The Tabellions were public officers appointed by the noblemen, to discharge the duties of notary under the seigneuriale jurisdiction. After the revolution, the Tabellions received the name of notaries, and were appointed by the government.

would lead us too far, or detain us too long ; but simply to explain the seeming contradiction you have remarked in the advice I have given you, relative to *your* submission to the established powers and the position in which *I* am placed with regard to the same authorities. All that I have said has been meant in reference to submission to the common laws, and those acts of authority which do not invade the domain of conscience ; but at that belonging to the jurisdiction of the divine law, no human power, whatever it may be, has a right to strike a blow. Should the National Assembly enact a decree ordering you to renounce your title of Christian, and deny the faith of Jesus Christ, I would say to you, My friends, refuse to obey that iniquitous decree, suffer martyrdom rather than submit to it ! And I am too well assured of the sincerity of your convictions, to doubt for one instant the course you would pursue under such circumstances. Ah well ! as for me, my friends, my conscience tells me that this pretended 'civil constitution of the clergy' attacks the laws of the Church, which are the same as the laws of God, since they emanate from the same source ; what the Church commands, God commands ; I should then believe myself a perjured and apostate priest if I took an oath to obey a law which I regarded as being directed against, or antagonistic to, the divine law. They have deprived me of the temporal revenues of the Church, and I submit with resignation ; they may strip me of the limited means now left me, and reduce me to poverty and want ; I will endure all these deprivations without a murmur or complaint. They may even compel me to lay aside my ecclesiastical habit,\* a question now being considered by our august

\* A decree forbidding the ecclesiastical costume to be worn was passed the 9th of April, 1793.

Assembly, and I will obey ; but they can not divest me of my character of priest, nor compel me, even in the face of fagot and torch, to pronounce an oath in violation of my conscience."

The good man spoke with a degree of animation and an earnest conviction that produced a profound impression upon his two interlocutors. A moment of painful silence followed this declaration, which seemed, amid the surrounding circumstances, like one of those professions of faith pronounced by the martyrs in the old times of persecution and death. Father Planart was first to break the silence.

"Pardon me, reverend father, for all I have so inconsiderately uttered : attribute it to my ignorance and stupidity. Now that I better understand you, I feel it here," he continued, striking his breast, "that you are right; but, alas ! as I have before remarked, in what kind of times do we live ? What is to become of us?"

An anxious sigh terminated these exclamations.

"I also understand," replied Monsieur Courlet, "the motives influencing your conduct, and can but applaud them ; but then, how comes it that so many other ecclesiastics have acted differently from you ? Is it for want of light or courage they have fallen into schism ?"

"We must be very cautious how we judge or condemn the conduct of others," replied the priest, gravely, "Judge not, lest you be judged." I shall not even venture, until the Church has declared it by the lips of the Sovereign Pontiff, to give the name of schism to the division manifesting itself to-day among the French clergy. I have simply said to you, that, in addition to so many other bad results of the revolution, we were likewise, I feared, threatened with a schism ; but it is for the Church to decide

this. When she shall have spoken, if her decision is conformable with my prediction, you may rest assured, my friends, the greater number of priests, who, through impulse or indiscretion, or from any other cause whatever, have taken the oath, will hasten to retract, and enter again into the bosom of the holy Catholic Church. Those who refuse to submit to her authority will be the smallest number, and form but an imperceptible minority of the French clergy. That defection will of course be a great misfortune; but the evil will be reduced to proportions which will greatly extenuate the pernicious results. Now, let us leave this unhappy subject, although we shall scarcely be able to approach another that will not prove equally conducive to sadness and tears. You were telling us just now, Father Planart, that the property of absentees had been sequestered—have you had any recent intelligence from the duke?"

"I have not heard directly from him since he arrived in Germany, when he wrote, requesting me to send all the money I possibly could collect to his banker at Nancy. I have since learned that he had rejoined the prince's army on the other side of the Rhine; but they so often change their quarters, I could not ascertain in what city he was. When in November last, the Assembly enacted the decree requiring absentees to return to France before the first of January of that year, under penalty of death and the sequestration of their estates, I constantly hoped, every day, to see him return; but the first of January is passed, and we are now near the end of February. However, I had not entirely despaired yet, until this sequestration notice appeared to-day, which I must confess deprives me of the last remaining hope."

"Ah well! my friends, see what a noble example is

given us by the Duke d'Auvrigny ! If, in defense of a political opinion, he does not scruple to sacrifice his fortune and his life, should we hesitate about sacrificing our lives and temporal interests to the cause of God and religion ?"

The conversation was here interrupted by a violent pull at the door-bell, and a moment after, Claudine, the priest's old housekeeper, entered with a frightened air, announcing that a stranger, "and with a bad enough countenance too," she added, desired to speak with her master and Monsieur Planart.

"And you have left him standing at the door, I suppose, because of the frightful face he wears?" said the priest in a reproachful tone.

"Oh ! no, sir, not at all. He asked permission to put his horse in the stable, and before giving me time to reply, he had entered the yard, and went straight over toward the stable, in spite of the darkness too, just as if it was somebody perfectly well acquainted with every nook and corner of the premises ; and this looks to me a little suspicious."

"Oh ! my gracious, it is some of our country people whom you have failed to recognize ; bring him in at once ; it is too cold to leave him out there."

Claudine opened the door, but immediately turned round, exclaiming, "Here he is, already mounting the stairs. I told you he was well acquainted with the house. Monsieur," she continued, turning toward the stranger, "you will have the goodness to walk in here." She ushered him in, and went off, muttering to herself, "Very sure am I this is none of our country people ; I know everybody well for more than three leagues round, and never have I seen *that* face before !"

This was likewise the impression the stranger made at

first on the three persons assembled in the priest's parlor. He was a man above the medium height, wearing a broad-brimmed hat, which he removed as he crossed the threshold of the apartment ; but his face remained none the less partially concealed by an enormous head of straight hair, which, instead of being tied in a queue behind, according to the fashion of the times, fell over his neck and shoulders, and was only sufficiently parted in the middle to permit a portion of his face to be visible. This style of *coiffure* was generally adopted by the peasantry of lower Alsace, and especially the Anabaptists ; but the rest of his costume differed essentially ; it consisted of a kind of long polonoise, descending very far below the knees, the collar of which was straight, lined with fur, and stood up in such a manner as to conceal entirely the chin and mouth of the traveler, so that scarcely any thing was visible except his nose, a portion of his forehead deeply furrowed with wrinkles, and his eyes, which, although not wanting in vivacity, wore an expression of intense melancholy ; finally, an enormous pair of grisly mustaches covered his lip, the corners extending toward his ears, and mingling with the long, coarse hair that hung down over his cheeks.

Altogether, as Claudine had said, this individual presented rather an unprepossessing appearance ; but it was only at the first glance : a practiced eye could readily discover that this uncouth exterior was but a disguise, under which was concealed another man, altogether different from the person he represented.

When Claudine left the room, the stranger again bowed, and approaching the fire, accepted the chair the priest hastened to offer him.

" I beg your pardon," he said, taking a seat, " for thus interrupting you, good sirs, but I have something of the

utmost importance to communicate to Monsieur le Curé and Monsieur Planart; however, Monsieur Courlet will not be in the way, as I have been too long acquainted with his character for discretion and prudence to be afraid of explaining myself in his presence."

Whilst he was saying this, the three friends regarded him with a stupefied air of amazement, interrogating each other with wondering eyes, to know who this singular character could be.

"Permit me, sir," the priest at length said to him, "to suggest that while you seem to know us all three very well, we are entirely ignorant to whom we have the honor of addressing ourselves."

At these words, the stranger, smiling sadly, arose from his chair, and said, "I see with pleasure that my costume will disguise me sufficiently in the eyes of strangers and of my enemies, since it prevents my best friends from recognizing me."

At the same time, unbuttoning the collar of his polonoise, he turned it down, removed the enormous wig that covered his head, and extending his hand to the priest and his two friends, with a distinguished air strangely at variance with his costume, he said in the most affable manner, "Ah well! you recognize me now, my friends?"

"My lord the Duke! the Duke himself!" cried in one voice the three astonished friends.

They then rapturously, and with the most affectionate respect, pressed the hand so cordially and graciously extended; but at the same time their countenances betrayed the surprise and apprehension this unexpected apparition of their old lord caused them, coming, as he had, at the very moment they were discussing together the subject of the dangers threatening him.

The duke, divining their apprehensions, hastened to answer the questions he saw ready to escape their lips, and which respect alone prevented them from asking.

"I understand your astonishment, my good friends, and will immediately relieve your anxiety by acquainting you with the grave motives that have induced me to undertake this journey. But as I have a great deal to say to you, I must request, before commencing our conversation, that my horse may be put in the stable; the poor beast is horribly fatigued from the long journey we have made to-day. I shall not be averse myself either to taking some refreshments, as I have eaten nothing since morning."

"I will go instantly," the good priest hastened to reply, "to put your horse in my stable, and give Claudine orders to prepare your supper."

"But I am well acquainted with your stable, Monsieur le Curé, and know there is absolutely no room but for one horse. Now, where will you put your own if mine is to be lodged there?"

"Mine? oh! I have had no horse for a long time. The government has thought it advisable to put me on foot, and taking my horse by requisition for the army, have not left me the wherewithal to buy another."

"Come then, I will make no farther objection. I had intended asking your hospitality, however, for myself only, and taxing Monsieur Planart with the care of my horse; but—"

"Then, my lord," quickly interrupted Monsieur Planart, "why not give him in my charge yet? my stables are very much larger and very much more convenient than that of Monsieur le Curé. Permit me, at least, since this

was your first intention, to share with him the honor of doing you a small service."

"I know your good heart, my dear Planart; therefore I wait to put it very soon to the test, by asking a favor of much more importance than the one you offer me at this moment. The arrangement proposed by our good father here suits me much better, since no one has seen me arrive, and my intention is to depart in the same manner, if possible, without being observed. If my horse was put in your stable, you know, your wife, your children, your servants, and neighbors would all want to know to whom it belonged; you would be obliged to satisfy their curiosity in some way, which might give rise to comments and bring us both, perhaps, into trouble. All is arranged here, I think, for the best, and now, if you will come and assist me in removing the harness, as you, I believe, understand it better than Monsieur le Curé, I will not impose that duty on him."

"Permit me, my lord," said Monsieur Courlet, who had not yet spoken, "to go and assist Father Planart in this, and spare both yourself and Monsieur le Curé the labor."

"As you please, then," replied the duke; "only let me advise you, I have a very heavy portmanteau, and I charge you, Master Courlet," he added, smiling, "in your quality of notary, to take care of it, as of a valuable deposit committed to your charge, because its contents are of great value and importance."

## CHAPTER VI.

### **FALSE IMPRESSIONS—MISFORTUNES OF AN EXILED GRAND-DUKE—NARRATIVE OF THE DUKE D'AUVRIGNY.**

WHEN the good Claudine entered to arrange the table for supper, she stopped as if stupefied at sight of the stranger; no longer recognizing him as the same person whom she had introduced a few moments before. He had removed his polonaise, and was dressed in a French coat with large steel buttons; pants like the coat, a vest with long, hanging pockets, and a pair of boots reaching to his knees, completed his costume. His physiognomy had undergone a still greater change: thin gray hair replaced the enormous wig he had worn at first, and left uncovered his noble features, impressed with a shade of subdued melancholy. Claudine made a profound reverence, in a very disconcerted manner, and began hurriedly to arrange the table, not, however, without numerous distractions, and often glancing stealthily at the stranger, who conversed in a low and earnest tone with her master. She at length retired, repeating constantly to herself, "I have seen that face somewhere; I am very certain it is not unknown to me."

While she was absorbed in these reflections in the kitchen, Father Planart and Monsieur Courlet entered, on their return from the stable.

"Help me, I pray you, good masters, to remember the name of that stranger you have up-stairs!"

"What!" said Monsieur Courlet, "you do not recognize him?"

"No, I assure you I do not."

"Ah well! it is the old judge of the bailiwick of C—."

"No, indeed! that is impossible. He would have looked all the time the same. No, it is not true; you are trying to deceive me."

"And what interest could I have in deceiving you?"

"That's so. But why was he tricked out in that droll manner when he came here?"

"Oh! because this is the carnival!"

"Ah! Monsieur Courlet, that is a little too much. Do you suppose you can make me believe that a judge, a respectable gentleman, would be going around masquerading, and come in any such style to visit Monsieur le Curé? Besides, if he has taken off the disguise he had on at first, then he has put on another, for he has now more the air of an Alsatian cattle-dealer than of a magistrate. Why is he not dressed in the black broadcloth coat he used to wear, and why has he got those great villainous mustaches?"

"Because he is no longer judge; since the revolution, he has been deposed. As to his new calling, you have guessed it almost exactly, for the ex-judge of C— has become, not a cattle merchant, but a dealer in horses, and is here now to sell one to the priest, instead of the one he has been deprived of by the army requisition. As to his mustaches, he wears them because he commands the National Guard of C—."

Claudine was almost convinced; the more readily as

she knew the Duke d'Auvrigny very slightly, and also the old judge, and there was really a positive likeness between them. However, she was not entirely convinced yet, and demanded of Father Planart if what Courlet said was true?"

"Monsieur Courlet," he gravely responded, "is a serious man, and not in the habit, as you well know, of joking. If you can not believe him, you had better inquire of the priest."

"That is so," replied Claudine. "Anyhow, Monsieur le Curé is at liberty to receive and entertain whoever he pleases in his own house; it is no concern of mine." Saying this, she took up a dish, and carried it up to the table.

"What was your idea," said Father Planart, when she was gone, "in telling such a story to that woman?"

"Upon my word, the idea was suggested to me singularly enough. First, you must know that Mademoiselle Claudine, excellent woman though she be, is very fond of gossiping; and without intending to do harm, and without wishing, or, I might say, without being aware of it herself, she tells every thing she knows (in the strictest confidence, of course) to two or three gossiping women, her friends, who never fail immediately to inform the whole parish. Consequently, when she asked us the stranger's name, I threw that of the old judge at her head, because there is really a striking resemblance between him and the duke. At the moment he removed his wig, I would have certainly taken him for the ex-judge; it was only when he held out his hand, or perhaps after yourself and Monsieur le Curé called his name, that I all at once recognized him. As for the story of the horse-dealer, you know the old judge is now really engaged in

that trade. These are the motives that determined me to deceive Claudine as I have done. The priest can tell her differently if he thinks best, but I had rather she should learn the secret from his lips than mine."

"I must confess you have acted with great prudence, Monsieur Courlet; certainly no one could accuse you of indiscretion."

"Secrecy is one of the essential obligations of my profession, and I have been accustomed for many years to observe it strictly."

Claudine, descending at this moment, said to them, "Monsieur le Curé and the judge (for I have recognized him perfectly this time) ask you to come up-stairs, if you please."

Courlet glanced with a smile at Planart, and both hastened to respond to the invitation. During their absence, the duke had interrogated the priest about them, to ascertain if they were entirely worthy of confidence. "Because," he said, "in these unfortunate times, you know, after an absence even slightly prolonged, we may find men no longer what we left them. For instance, see that Grospin, in whom I placed such implicit confidence. I learn he has thrown himself headlong into this new movement, and made common cause with the most extravagant demagogues. My confidence in him was such, that had I not been warned by your brother at Blagny, I should have gone at once to his house, and confided to him a share of the delicate trust I have reserved for Father Planart and Monsieur Courlet. I might, however, have suspected him during my absence, because, in spite of the most urgent solicitations, he has not sent me one sou of the rents, excusing himself constantly by writing the most polite letters full of absurd reasons for his delin-

quency ; on the other hand, Father Planart, after receiving my first appeal, hastened immediately to remit me all the funds in his hands."

" And without doubt," added the priest, " he has scrupulously treasured up every thing he has received since that time, and notwithstanding the injunctions of the treasurer, holds it now at your disposal, as he often expressed to me his regret at being unable to send you the money on account of not having your address. So much for his honesty. As for political and religious opinions, neither Planart nor Courlet have varied in their principles during fifteen years, that I am aware of ; they, in fact, carry their views to such an extent that I, refractory priest as you know me to be, am compelled to preach to them, in positive terms, submission to the new laws and authorities ; otherwise they would constantly be liable to compromise themselves with the government."

" The opinion I had formed of them was correct then ; but I am very well satisfied, nevertheless, to have your confirmation of that opinion."

As soon as the notary and register had returned to the room, Monsieur Courlet hastened to give an account of the false impression he had made on the mind of Claudiine, relating minutely the conversation that had passed between them in presence of Monsieur Planart. " Now," he continued, " she is firmly convinced that the guest of Monsieur le Curé is really the old ex-judge of C——. I have thought it my duty," he said, in conclusion, " my dear father, to conceal this circumstance from your housekeeper, leaving you, however, to confirm or deny what I have stated, as you may deem most expedient."

" You have done well," replied the priest, " in not disclosing the name of our guest ; still, I think it would

have been better to have simply evaded her question, or even said you did not know the gentleman, rather than to have embarked in so complicated a history."

"Ah ! Monsieur le Curé," replied Courlet, "it is very easy to discover you know nothing about women. Had I told her I did not know this man, her woman's curiosity would have been excited to the highest imaginable pitch, and she would have used every effort possible to find out. As it is, her curiosity being satisfied, she will think no more about it."

"Very well, perhaps you are right," replied the priest, smiling.

"Most assuredly he is right," interrupted the duke quickly. "It is indeed an excellent idea you have followed in this matter, my dear Courlet, and we shall be able later to profit by it. At any rate, it affords me a proof of your sagacity and discretion, and gives new assurance to the confidence with which you have already inspired me. Now, Monsieur le Curé, as soon as the table is removed, we will have our little talk together ; for I am most anxious to lay before you three gentlemen the propositions I have to make."

In a few moments, Claudine, by the priest's directions, had cleared the little parlor which served also as a dining-room. The duke was seated in a large arm-chair, in the chimney-corner, the priest sat opposite him, Courlet and Planart occupying the space between them ; the four thus forming a contracted semicircle, of which the grate was the centre. The duke then opened the conversation as follows :

"You know I have not been one of the first to leave the country ; but I am not afraid, on that account, of being accused of want of devotion to the monarchical cause.

While I beheld in every direction the nobility of France flying from the country, and even princes of the blood themselves giving the example of this wholesale desertion, I remained at the post confided me by the king, and struggled with all the energy with which I was capable against the spirit of revolution. I had then no thought of leaving France, when one evening a post-chaise drove up before my hotel. A woman descended. Judge of my surprise on finding it was the duchess, my wife, who held a position of honor near the queen. We usually met each year, at the close of her engagement, when I always went to Versailles or Paris to rejoin her. I consequently experienced a positive shock on seeing her arrive in this unexpected manner. She was, moreover, in a very delicate state of health, and this precipitate journey, I feared, was liable to be followed by the most serious consequences. She brought concealed about her person, letters from the queen, addressed to her brothers-in-law, the Counts of Provence and Artois, then at Coblenz. To me she brought a formal order bearing the king's own signature, enjoining me to deliver those letters with my own hands, to the persons addressed. I was convinced he contemplated some important undertaking bearing on the safety of the royal family. The slightest hesitation on my part had looked like treason; we set out therefore the same night, and hastened to reach the frontiers of Prussia.

"I only learned afterward the true meaning of that mission: the queen, seeing that my wife, to whom she was greatly attached, was unable to endure the violent excitements unceasingly following in rapid succession, and always coining *crescendo* since the fatal day's work of the 6th of October, had determined to save us, my

wife and me, by forcing us to leave the country. The letters we carried were of no importance. When I delivered the one addressed to the Count of Provence, he seemed at first surprised that I had been sent on such a mission; then when I showed him the king's express order and related the particulars of my wife's departure, he said with a smile, 'Ah! I understand now; my sister's letter has been but a pretext, which she has used to send some new recruits into our ranks. You are most welcome, Monsieur, among us, where your place has been waiting for a long time already.'

"There was no means of retreating, I was really and truly a refugee; but notwithstanding my gratitude to the queen for her generous kindness, I was not satisfied with the precipitate manner in which I had been obliged to leave, having had no time to issue an order with regard to the slightest affair, nor even to see and embrace my child, who was being reared some leagues from Bar.

"We had carried with us only the money I found on hand at the moment of my departure, together with that my wife had brought from Paris, and her jewels—that is to say, about five or six thousand livres in specie, and twenty or thirty thousand livres' worth of jewelry.

"Although I had greatly reduced the retinue of my household, and managed with the strictest economy, yet the expense of living abroad is very great, and particularly at Coblenz. It was on this account I endeavored to obtain the arrears due from my different domains in France, and wrote to my agents and principal tenants. The first sent me only a part of what was due me; the others sent me nothing at all. One only, among them, hastened to forward all he had in his hands, and even advanced, out of his own individual means, several amounts

that were not yet due. With this person, my friends, you are all well acquainted, and I need not mention his name."

The priest and notary looked immediately at Father Planart, who cast down his eyes and blushed like a child.

"Yes, my friends, this worthy register," continued the duke, pressing the hand of Planart, who sat beside him, "has indeed rendered me a signal service. I wished to take my wife to her family and leave her with them for a time; her mother resided in a castle in the lower part of Hungary, on the frontiers of Transylvania. To make this journey, it was necessary to have money, and I no longer had any. I should have been compelled to pawn with some German Jew, for a merely nominal amount, the jewels of my wife, which she greatly prized, had not the sum been immediately hurried to me by Father Planart.

"The journey was then made—sad and fatal journey, terminating in a frightful catastrophe; so true it is, that when once misfortune attaches herself to a man, she pursues him with relentless determination until she has overwhelmed and crushed him !

"During the entire route, my wife was suffering, and had scarcely arrived at the castle of Blenheim, when she was taken dangerously ill. For three long days she suffered intense agony, until at last God in his mercy relieved her of her pain, and took her to himself."

Here the duke paused, overcome with grief at the recollection of his losses and sorrows. He remained for several moments with his handkerchief to his eyes, and his face buried in his hands. His auditors remained silent out of respect for a grief in which they all deeply sympathized. The priest at length ventured to speak, saying in a grave and solemn manner, "We have been entirely ignorant until this moment, my lord, of the cruel

bereavement you have experienced, the fearful affliction that has befallen you. If it were possible by our deep sympathy to relieve the bitterness of your grief, you know you would be quickly consoled. But we will all pray for you—prayer is the sole remedy for these great and overwhelming afflictions by which God is oftentimes pleased to try those whom he has chosen for his own."

"Thank you, my dear father; thank you, my good friends," replied the duke, slowly raising his head, and uncovering his face, wet with burning tears. "Oh ! yes," he continued, "I have indeed great need of your sympathy and your prayers, for there is perhaps no man living who has been so cruelly scourged by misfortune as myself, and I have not yet arrived at the summit of my miseries. But a few years ago, and I was one of the most influential and powerful lords of France ; duke and peer of the kingdom, lieutenant-general of the king's army, and governor of the province—none were my superiors in authority, save princes of the blood themselves. United to a young and lovely wife, the queen's especial favorite, I felt assured of a brilliant future. I beheld myself with joy and pride born again in a posterity to whom I could bequeath honors, titles, and wealth. In a few fleeting years, all those brilliant prospects, all those glorious anticipations have vanished into nothingness ; and to crown my misfortunes, the beloved and cherished wife of my bosom, she who had been the one great consolation amid all my agonies, has been cruelly torn from me ! And now, behold me here, a fugitive in the country of my ancestors, compelled to hide myself, like a criminal, under a miserable disguise, in order to visit the birthplace of my fathers. Behold me, the rich and powerful lord of yesterday, to-day proscribed, condemned to death, without an

asylum, without fortune—compelled, in order to behold again my only child, and rescue, if possible, a remnant of the immense inheritance I had destined for him, to hazard my liberty and perhaps my life! Are these not trials enough, have I not been sufficiently humiliated? O my God! my God! when will Thy hand cease to be laid so heavily upon me? What have I done to merit these fearful chastisements?" And he again ceased to speak, his voice stifled by sobs and groans.

Father Planart wept in silence; Courlet blew his nose obstreperously, while wiping the tears cautiously from his eyes; the priest, none the less affected, but more master of his feelings, essayed to speak some words of consolation, or, rather, of resignation.

"Calm yourself, my dear lord," he said gently; "endeavor to lay the painful desolations and sufferings you endure at the foot of the Cross. They are as nothing compared with those suffered by our divine Lord and Saviour; and, moreover, if you offer them up to Him, as a propitiation for sin, they will become for you a pledge of immortal felicity hereafter. Place your confidence in God; He will sustain and never abandon you."

"I thank you for your salutary and Christian counsel; my dear father," replied the duke in a tone slightly more composed. "Thank God I have never forgotten the precepts of my religion. If in the midst of prosperity and grandeur, I have for long years neglected to practice them, when overtaken by adversity, it has been to that religion I have had recourse, and in it alone have found consolation and strength to endure my bitter woes. I know well that I am not yet entirely resigned; nature often rebels within me, and I oftentimes permit myself to be cast down and discouraged, as you see me at this mo-

ment, in your presence. But I have no fears of falling into despair, nor of entirely losing my courage. I shall struggle on until the end, by the help of God, with all the strength He will give me. True, it is not for myself that I would make any exertion, or wish to live, but for my son, the only tie binding me to earth. It remains for me now to inform you of my intentions, as I rely upon each one of you to assist me in carrying out the designs I have formed for my son ; this is the object of my being here to-day."

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONTINUATION OF THE DUKE D'AUVRIGNY'S NARRATIVE.

AFTER pausing several moments, the duke continued : " Three children were born of my marriage. The two eldest died at an early age ; they had been reared in the palace we occupied at Versailles, under the immediate supervision of their mother, and their nurses selected by the best physicians of the country. The death of these children was one of our first sorrows ; but we were both young, and had every reason to hope that God would give us other offspring to replace those we had lost. At the birth of our next child, I was advised by a most skillful physician to send him into the country to be nursed, as the others had died because of being too closely confined in the apartments of the hotel ; and country air, and the milk of a good country nurse, would be far more conducive to health and life than the vitiated atmosphere of the city and the too delicate care and anxious attentions of the mother.

" We followed his advice, and our child was placed near Chateau Thierry, with a good farmer's wife, who had been most highly recommended. I selected this place because of its being on the route from Paris to Bar, and whenever I visited the capital, I could also visit my son. We soon had every reason to congratulate ourselves on the course

we had taken. Since his birth, the health of our child has continued always perfect, and our intention was, in order to fortify his constitution still more, to let him pass the first three or four years of his infancy with his foster-mother.

"I have already told you, that leaving so precipitately, we had not even time to give a parting embrace to our dear child ; but the assurance we enjoyed of his being well and tenderly cared for relieved this deprivation of much of its bitterness. Other cares and anxieties increasing around me, without making me forget, gave me less time to think of him ; but after the cruel loss of my wife, when the first paroxysm of grief had slightly subsided, then my thoughts returned to him, whose mother, at the moment of death, had said, 'Live, my dear husband, for our child ; he will have no one in the world, now, but yourself.'

"To think of him was still to think of her whom I so hopelessly mourned, and to obey her last request. All my solicitude therefore was centred upon this child, when a circumstance, which I was far from anticipating, occurred, giving a new impulse to my movements.

"I was still at the Chateau de Blenheim, and my mother-in-law, as a diversion, induced me to visit the domains belonging to the castle, now the property of my son. It was a consoling thought, that if the revolution deprived me of my possessions in France, my son would find ample indemnity in the inheritance of his mother.

"One day, while preoccupied with these reflections, I was accosted by a man, dressed in black, wearing a white cravat and an enormous wig, or *perruque*, powdered and frizzled. From his manner, cold and formal, although not wanting in politeness, I at first supposed him to be the minister of a little Protestant chapel in the neighborhood ;

but he very soon introduced himself, explaining his title and position, and I at once understood I had business with Monsieur Borkoff, doctor of laws, advocate or solicitor in I know not what court of justice.

"I asked him to what I was indebted for the honor of his visit? He replied that he was intrusted with the business and invested with the authority of the Baron of Blakestein and Blenheim, cousin-german of my deceased wife, and in that relation the nearest of kin and her heir.

"'Her heir!' I cried, in amazement. 'Are you not aware, then, that the duchess left a child?'

"'I was entirely ignorant of it,' he said. 'In that event, you have only to produce the certificate of the birth or baptism of that child, and a certificate authentically witnessed and duly legalized, establishing the fact of his existence posterior to the death of the duchess, then I will suspend the protective measures I am obliged to take, in order to guarantee the rights of my client.'

"'But, sir,' I replied, 'I have not in my possession the papers you require; however, I can certify upon honor—and I think, on the part of a duke and peer of France, such an affirmation should be entitled to some weight—I can testify,' I said, 'that there is a living child of the Duchess d'Auvrigny now in France, a son, who is alone entitled to the succession.'

"'Assuredly, sir,' he answered, in a polite but frigid manner, 'as a man, I believe you implicitly; I should not even require of you an affirmation upon honor; your simple declaration would be all-sufficient; but, as an instrument of the law, I am compelled to demand other than verbal testimony, and must insist upon being furnished with written proofs, strict documentary evidence.'

"'But those written proofs I have not got; I left France

too precipitately to think of furnishing myself with such documents, and, besides, who could have supposed I should ever stand in need of them? At this time, it would be very difficult for me to procure such papers, as you are aware that all refugees are proscribed; our letters are intercepted on the frontier, and those addressed to us do not reach us, or reach us with great difficulty.'

"' Have you had any very recent intelligence of this child ?'

"' For the reasons just given you, I have heard nothing from him since my arrival in Germany, more than six months ago.'

"' Ah well ! sir,' he continued in a sententious manner, and weighing every word, ' I was correct then in saying to you, that a representative of the law is not empowered to receive other than authenticated evidence ; because you yourself, with the best intentions in the world, might be mistaken in affirming that this child, the issue of your marriage with the Duchess d'Auvrigny, *née* Baroness de Blenheim, is living ; likewise, that he has survived his mother, so as to be entitled to the succession either in his own right or that of his representatives. From your own statement, it has been six months since you have had any intelligence of him, and in that length of time, who can be responsible for the life or death of any one, and, above all, that of an infant of such tender years ?'

"' This suggestion of the man made me shudder. ' And you,' I cried in terror, ' tell me, can it be you have heard any thing of the fate of my child ?'

"' We have heard nothing on the subject,' he continued in the same phlegmatic manner ; ' we were ignorant even of the existence of this child of whom you speak, as I have already had the honor of telling you ; and I have

come, in the name of the noble baron, my client, to notify you of his title as sole and only heir to the property, real and personal, appertaining and belonging to the inheritance of the deceased Mary Theresa Wilhelmina de Blenheim, late Duchess d'Auvrigny, and to take, in his name, possession of the entire property, personal and real. Your allegation being only verbal, and not supported by written evidence, will change nothing, and can not prevent the formal act of taking immediate possession for the benefit of my client; but you, sir, can protest, if you think proper, by an extra-judiciary action, after which you will be obliged to reproduce within a given time, specified by the court, the written documents and authenticated proofs establishing the existence of a direct heir to the deceased duchess, which will overrule the claims of the collateral heir; in which case, our taking possession would be accounted as only provisional, and we would restore then to the rightful heir the domains in question.'

"The fact was, he had come to take possession of the estates, and I had no means of preventing him. My mother-in-law could give me no advice, having been ill since the death of her daughter, and at times her mind was quite deranged. Besides, she was not materially interested in this question of the succession, having no claims on the inheritance of her daughter, except the payment of her assigned dower upon the estates belonging to the barony of Blenheim; and this payment was secured, whoever should fall heir to the inheritance.

"The good lady, however, would greatly prefer the heir should be her grandson, instead of her nephew, not only because she would naturally be inclined to prefer the son of her dear Wilhelmina to that of her husband's brother, but also because she had been for a long time very much

annoyed by this man. ‘ Beware of him ! ’ she said to me, ‘ he is a bad man ; I have known him for long years. He wanted to marry my daughter—not because he was attached to her, but for her fortune. I opposed it violently, and to avoid his attentions, consented that my daughter, notwithstanding her extreme youth, should rejoin your queen, Marie Antoinette. When he was apprised of your marriage with Wilhelmina, he became furious ; he abused and uttered threats against me, against you, and against his cousin also. Then he left the country, and for many years I heard no more of him, and I had hoped we were rid of him forever, when yesterday I was informed of his return. I wondered what motive could have induced him to come back, and to-day his business agent has come to inform us. Now, my lord, I advise you to consult some skillful lawyer at Vienna, and have him direct you in this matter. As to myself, I have no other advice to give, only to repeat and warn you, beware of the Baron de Blakestein ; he is a bad man, and capable of doing any thing ! ’

“ In accordance with the advice of my wife’s mother, I consulted several lawyers. All agreed in pronouncing the case a grave and serious one ; that once the baron got possession of the estates, it would be a very difficult matter to dispossess him. He had evidently counted on the obstacles I should meet in obtaining the proofs necessary for establishing the existence of my child ; and perhaps, one of them observed to me, during the progress of the French revolution, that child, if alive now, may himself yet be lost ; because, since the direction the revolution has taken, the arrest of the king at Varennes, and his captivity, since his return to Paris, it was certain that, conformably to the declaration of Philnitz, Germany and Prussia

would no longer delay, but immediately declare war against France. The allied armies would probably enter France through Champagne, in their march on Paris; the countries through which they passed would be given up to all the calamities of invasion; my son being directly on the route that would be followed by the allied troops, the child would be exposed either to perish, or to be captured and forcibly abducted—in a word, the child might disappear, as I have said, and especially, since a powerful baron has become interested in his disappearance in order to insure the spoliation of his inheritance.

“These last reflections made me tremble. I was unwilling, however, to believe the Baron de Blakestein could be guilty of such a degree of perfidy; but even though this suspicion proved a calumnious one, it was none the less true that my child, in remaining with his foster-parents, would necessarily be exposed to incalculable dangers. From that moment, my resolution was taken, and I resolved at all personal risks to remove him from the impending dangers.

“Before venturing upon my undertaking, however, I resolved to make application to the ministers of the emperor, and other influential persons at the court of Vienna, with the hope of obtaining from the Aulic Council a demurrer to the decree in possession of the baron. I was received by all these dignitaries with studied politeness, but with a glacial frigidity. Against the declarations of a positive order, they gave me to understand, the authority of the council could not go, under existing circumstances, so far as to embarrass the regular action of the law. I understood, notwithstanding all these fine phrases, that while the Baron de Blakestein was personally held in but slight estimation, yet he belonged to an influential family,

and they would not be averse to seeing the immense estates of my wife return to the representative of this powerful Austrian family, rather than pass into the hands of a stranger. I then comprehended all the sorrow and bitterness one must drag along with the name of 'stranger,' and especially a proscribed alien and exile. I found I should be obliged to rely on myself alone, and immediately returned to put in execution the plans I had formed.

"This project, my friends, consisted in returning to France, removing my son from the care of his foster-mother, and placing him in safety, in a country where I should not have to dread the consequences of an invasion if it took place, and where he might remain under the protection of true and devoted friends.

"It was also necessary, in order to execute this project, to find a traveling companion of approved intelligence and fidelity. Happily, I had just such a man near at hand. This was an old servant of my father-in-law's house, who had guarded the infancy of my wife, had accompanied her to France, and returned with us to Germany. Fritz (the name of this faithful servant) had always been devoted to my children; he had deplored, perhaps, as much as ourselves, the death of those we had lost, and centred upon this last surviving child all the attachment he had cherished for his mistress, their mother. It was him whom she had commissioned to visit the nurse every month, and see that nothing was needed by the woman or her foster-child, and he accomplished his mission with a solicitude truly paternal.

"When I made my plans known to him, and proposed he should accompany me, he was overwhelmed with joy. Our preparations were very soon made. Thanks to our

disguise and the passports we had procured in Switzerland, we were able to pass for merchants from the canton of Berne, traveling in France on business.

"Until the present time, I have succeeded as entirely as I could desire. By the aid of my disguise, I arrived safely at Paris, but remained there a very short time; the terrible decree hanging over my head would every moment recur to me, and the few friends to whom I was not afraid to make myself known advised me to leave as soon as possible, as I was every moment compromising my life and the future of my child.

"This last consideration prevailed over all others. The notary of my family (a man whose loyalty and integrity it delights me to praise and remember) advanced a sufficient sum in gold, and furnished me also with bills of exchange on bankers in Switzerland and Germany, besides procuring me duplicate copies of the certificate of my son's birth, and gave me also a copy of my marriage contract, the original of which was filed in his office. I did not wish to accept an advance of funds to such an amount, advising him that I knew not when or how I should ever be able to reimburse him. 'Let that consideration give you no uneasiness, my lord,' he replied; 'as for myself, I have not the least apprehension; I should feel myself unworthy of the confidence with which you have honored me in your prosperity, if to-day I failed to assist you, with my feeble means, in getting through this hazardous and all-important crisis. Happier times will return very soon, I hope, and then we will have abundant leisure to settle our accounts. In the mean time, hasten to leave Paris, and get out of France; I shall not feel secure until I know you are beyond the frontiers.'

"On reaching Paris, I had sent Fritz to Chateau-Thier-

ry to bring my son, not wishing to expose myself on that road, where I was so well known that my disguise, perhaps, would not have sufficiently concealed me. The following day, he returned, bringing my little son, fresh and blooming with health, and all-delighted with his journey and meeting his old friend Fritz, whom he recognized, although he had not seen him for six months. As for myself, the poor child did not know me, and received my caresses with an air of serious coldness; and this timidity was increased from the fact that while embracing him, I was unable to restrain my tears, so vividly did he recall to my mind his mother, whom he resembled in a striking manner.

"My good notary had again arranged our Swiss passport with the French authorities, and we started, taking the same route by which we had come, through Troyes and Langres. I was careful to lodge in the same inns at which we had been entertained, as we went on, and where I had told we were going to Paris on business, and would return very soon to our own country. In that way, we escaped all suspicion, and readily passed for foreigners, especially as we constantly spoke German to each other, and when speaking French, gave it with as broad German accent as possible.

"In this way, we reached Bourbonne-les-Bains, where I left Fritz with the child, and came on here alone."

"And why," interrupted Father Planart, "did you not bring them with you. I should like, above all things, to see your son, and to shake the hand of that good Fritz, whom I already esteem as a friend and brother, although I have never met him."

"I am going to tell you, my dear Planart, and at the same time explain you the second part of my programme,

in executing which I have relied on your assistance, as well as that of Monsieur le Curé and M. Courlet.

"I have already told you, that, in removing my son from his nurse, my intention was to place him where he would not be exposed to the dangers necessarily attending an invasion, and have him under the protection of persons in whom I could repose the most perfect confidence. Well, my friends, *this* is precisely the place I have had in view, and the persons I would select, above all others, are yourselves."

The duke paused a moment to mark the effect this announcement would produce on his auditors. Their faces expresed no other sentiment than a very natural astonishment, mingled with concealed satisfaction, and a desire to hear the conclusion of this explanation. The duke continued: "Yes, my friends, it is in your hands I have resolved to deposit this precious trust, and this is the part I intend each one of you to take in its guardianship. My son has scarcely attained his third year; he has need therefore of the care of a woman who will watch over him with all the tenderness of a mother. Your wife, Father Planart, whom I know to be the good mother of a family, will be willing to take upon herself this duty; your children, some of them, I believe, near the age of my son, will be his companions, his brothers, and you yourself will become his foster-father. Do you accept the trust?" said the duke, holding out his hand.

"Oh! my lord!" cried Father Planart, seizing the extended hand, and covering it with tears and kisses, "how can I thank you sufficiently for giving me this proof of your confidence? Truly, I have been thinking of this all the time you were speaking; but I should never have dared to make the request of you!"

"But, my dear lord," observed M. Courlet, "you have promised Monsieur le Curé and me a share in this guardianship, which you have justly termed a 'precious deposit,' and now I can not see what we will have to do, since Father Planart, it appears to me, is intrusted with the entire charge."

"A little patience, my friend; you will also have your tasks assigned, and they will not be the lightest, nor the least delicate. With you, I shall have to deposit the title-deeds of the family, and all the papers establishing the lawful rank of that child, and his birthright. I shall confide to your keeping my will, in which you are appointed one of the co-tutors of my son; because, if we should at all times be prepared for death, it is more essentially necessary to make that preparation in times like the present; finally, I propose to leave in your hands also a certain sum of money, which you will invest in such a manner as you may judge most safe and profitable, the interest of which is to be employed in the education and maintenance of my son."

"But, my lord," replied Father Planart, "I have in my hands now nearly ten thousand francs, collected before the sequestration act was passed, and which remains at your disposal."

"I am aware of it, my friend. Ah well! that sum can be added to the amount intended for M. Courlet, and the interest can go toward paying my son's board. As for you, Monsieur le Curé, I reserve for you the most important duty of all. If Father Planart is intrusted with his physical nourishment, if to Monsieur Courlet is confided the charge of watching over his temporal interests, it is to you, sir, I beg to commit the care and nourishment of his soul, the cultivation of his heart and mind. Teach

him, above all things, at an early age, to understand his religion and to practice it ; for religion alone will enable him to endure, without murmuring, the loss of his family inheritance ; and if that loss should only prove temporary, and he should one day be restored to the rank his birth entitles him, religion will still be necessary to prevent him from falling into the dangerous snares with which prosperity and wealth will surround him. Well, my friends, you know now what I expect from each one of you. I need not ask if I can rely on you ; in the expression of every countenance, I read your reply."

" You should also add," replied the priest, " that it would have been doing us great injustice to have doubted us for one moment. Yes, my dear lord, I accept the trust in my own name, and in the name of my two friends, and we will consecrate all our strength and all our zeal to respond worthily to the confidence with which you have honored us."

" Thanks, my good friends, most heartfelt thanks," replied the duke, taking each in succession cordially by the hand ; " I expected nothing less from you, be assured. And now that we fully understand each other, if you will permit me, I will retire to rest, and to-morrow we will arrange the remaining details of this important matter."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A VISIT TO THE SUBTERRANEAN VAULTS OF THE CASTLE. —PRUDENCE AND DISCRETION OF MADEMOISELLE CLAUDINE.

THE next day, at an early hour, the notary and register betook themselves again to the vicarage. They found the duke and the priest already awaiting their arrival, in the little sitting-room. The conversation of the previous evening was immediately resumed, and all the details relative to the execution of the duke's plans were discussed.

It was decided that on the following morning, before daybreak, the duke and Father Planart, together with the wife of the latter, should set out for Bourbonne-les-Bains, only four leagues distant from Auvrigny. The child was to be placed in the hands of his new foster-parents, and the duke with his faithful Fritz take the route on his return to Switzerland. In this way, no one at Auvrigny would be apprised of the arrival or departure of the ancient lord of the manor.

It was also decided that the child should pass, at least for a certain period, as the son of Planart's cousin, who had lived many years in the village of Serqueux, near Bourbonne-les-Bains, and who, having lost his wife, had gone, with his eldest son, to establish himself at Bourgogne, in the environs of Macon; and not wishing to be

embarrassed with the care of the youngest, had placed him in charge of his cousin, until he reached the age of ten or twelve years.

All the circumstances concerning the cousin of Serqueux were true, except that he had taken both his children with him ; but of this, the people of the country were in ignorance.

The duke afterward deposited with the notary sixty thousand francs in gold, which he carried in his portmanteau. Upon M. Courlet suggesting that he had better keep a portion of this amount to defray the expenses of his journey and living abroad, the duke replied that they would permit no large amount of specie to pass the frontier ; that he carried with him only sufficient to pay his expenses. As to his future necessities in Germany, the bills of exchange furnished him by his notary at Paris would support him many years ; "because," he added, with a smile, "I shall not require, down there, the retinue of a great lord ; I am nothing more at present than a simple soldier of the prince's army, and my faithful Fritz composes my entire household. I should wish rather," he continued, in a more serious tone, "that it were in my power to deposit with you a much larger amount ; for, indeed, who knows but this may be the only vestige which will remain to my son of all the vast inheritance of his fathers ? I am convinced, unless the revolution is arrested in its march, that it will be but a little while until the sequestration of property is followed by confiscation, and the estates of absentees turned over to the government, and brought to sale, in order to procure money ; for a revolution is an affair much more expensive than royalty. But let us leave politics, and return to our own business. As soon as I reach Germany, I

will endeavor, by the assistance of the papers with which I am furnished, to prevent the spoliation of the maternal inheritance of my son ; but I have to deal with a strong and powerful opposition, and still very much fear I shall be defeated. Therefore, as I have just said, the only secure inheritance of my son is this pitiable sum of seventy thousand francs, which I leave in your hands. Think of the son of an Auvrigny, the heir of one of the noblest and most opulent families of France, reduced to a revenue of three thousand livres, at the utmost calculation ! I am consoled, however, by the reflection that my son can not accuse me of having dissipated his fortune ; he will be indebted to this revolution alone for the accomplishment of his ruin, abolishing his titles and effacing his family escutcheon. But that which this mighty revolution will never have power to do, will be to extinguish the brilliancy of those glorious achievements that have crowned his ancestors with honors and distinctions. I leave in your hands, Monsieur Courlet, the royal decrees, emanating from the courts of the kings of France, to the Dukes of Bourgogne and Lorraine, recording the services rendered by our ancestors, and the heroic actions by which they have merited the commendation and reward of their sovereigns. But be not afraid, my friends," he continued, after a pause of some minutes, " have no fears, and especially you, my good curé, that, in desiring my son, one day, to be made acquainted with the honorable titles of my family, I wish to excite in him a spirit of vainglory. Ah no ! such is by no means my intention ; on the contrary, I only desire, in his education, you make him understand that a man can vaunt himself on his own individual merits alone, and not on the merits or achievements of his ancestors ; that in these old parchments, already half

eaten by worms, as in the ruins of the old castle crowning yonder hill, he should only seek those souvenirs calculated to excite his soul to emulation, and, above all, to preserve inviolate the motto of his forefathers : “*Deo et regi fidelis perpetuo.*”\* Let his life be conformed to that device, and all my wishes will be accomplished.”

Saying this, the duke laid on the table an enormous package of deeds, charts, and diplomas, some of which were dated back as far as the Crusades. The priest examined these ancient documents with great interest, and assisted the notary in deciphering and arranging them, in order to take an inventory, when the latter suddenly observed that he doubted whether his office would be a sufficiently secure place of deposit for papers of so much importance, or even for the gold the duke wished to leave with him. He was often visited by government agents, who, after the law was passed abolishing the feudal rights, came to his office in search of all title-deeds of that nature, and had taken possession of and conveyed them to archives of the district. He was daily in anticipation of a similar visit, following the act of sequestration, and if they discovered these documents, they would not hesitate to take forcible possession of them. On one occasion, they had demanded to know whether he had any money in his hands, or personal property of any kind, belonging to the *ci-devant* Duke d’Auvergne ; he had declared not, and now, if they should think it advisable to make another visit to his domicile, and find there sixty thousand francs in gold, how would he be able to explain the matter ? because they very well knew that he, a poor village notary, had never that amount of money at his disposal, and of all his clients, none would be able to de-

\* “To God and the king always faithful.”

posit more than a trivial sum. "I hope," he added, finally, "that the duke will see in my observations only a very legitimate fear, and not a refusal to take charge of the deposit he wishes to confide to me."

"I have not the least doubt of your intentions, my dear Courlet," replied the duke, "and I perceive in this very legitimate fear only a proof of your prudence and discretion. But," he added, after reflecting a moment, "I believe there is a way to prevent the inconvenience you have such just cause to fear. Are you acquainted, my dear curé, with the subterranean vaults under the castle?"

"I know, as every one in the village does, of the one called the 'Fairies' Grotto,' and some of the subterranean galleries, which have been used during many years for the extraction of iron ore to supply the upper furnace; but I assure you I have never had the curiosity to explore these passages, nor even to visit the one called in the legend of the country, 'The Counterfeiter's Workshop.'"

"It is not of those vaults I am speaking. Can it be possible your predecessor has never acquainted you with the underground communication existing between the crypt of your church and the vaults of the castle?"

"He has certainly never given me any such information."

"That astonishes me very much, because it was he who disclosed this secret to me, more than twenty years ago, and I charged him to make it known to his vicar as soon as he arrived, as it was some time previous to your nomination to the office."

"It occurs to me now that I heard him speak of a secret he wished to communicate; but he always neglected doing so. It was only after he had been stricken down by an attack of apoplexy, to which he succumbed, that he

gave me a bunch of keys; having lost the power of speech, he tried in vain to explain their use. After his death, I tried the keys in all the locks of the church and my house, and found none they would open. I imagined these keys might have reference to the secret he had to communicate, but after the fruitless attempts I had made, thinking it impossible to discover it, I let the matter escape entirely from my mind."

"And the keys, have you kept them?"

"They are here," said the priest, opening a drawer in his secretary, in the bottom of which he had placed them.

"Ah! so much the better," replied the duke, examining the keys. "This is all right. Now, my dear Courlet, have no more fears about the deposit in question. I will show you a place where our valuables will be secure against the researches of all the treasury agents employed by the revolutionary government. First, conduct us to the sacristy," he said, addressing the curate, "and furnish each of us with a torch."

When they reached the sacristy by a passage communicating with the priest's house, the duke lighted the torches, and made the curé open the door of a deep closet sunk in the thickness of an old wall, forming part of the fortifications in front of the castle. This closet was thoroughly wainscoted. The duke raised, not without some difficulty, one of the heavy panels; there appeared a door, the lock of which was opened by one of the keys on the bunch. It gave entrance to a stairway, by which they descended into the crypt or subterranean chapel. They all four entered this narrow passage, the duke going first, to act as guide.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, they found themselves in the midst of a vaulted apartment, around which

were arranged the tombs of the ancient lords of Auvrigny. The duke immediately knelt in prayer, his companions following his example.

"What think you of this place, my friends?" he remarked, on rising from his knees. "Does it not seem to you most suitably chosen for concealing and placing under the protection of God and these gallant knights, my old ancestors, the wreck of the fortune of the last scion of the house of Auvrigny?"

All approved the idea, and Father Planart added, "I have a chest which I have used for depositing the rents and other revenues of the estate. Now, it will be of no farther use to me, and I might just as well bring it here, and you can lock up the gold and all those papers in it."

"Very well, that is just the thing," said Courlet. "I know the chest, it has two locks and two keys; you can keep one and I the other. Monsieur le Curé shall take the key of the vault; in this way, we will each have our share of the responsibility, which seems to me a little too heavy for my shoulders alone."

"As you please," replied the duke; "however, were the deposit placed in the hands of one of you or of all three, I should consider it equally safe. Now that we have arranged this matter, I want to show you something else, which might be of some use to you during these troublesome times."

He unlocked with another key a door opening in the side of the family vault. This door gave admittance to a passage about ten feet in length, at the extremity of which was another stairway, much longer than the one they had just descended. Mounting these steps, they found themselves in a vaulted corridor, dimly lighted by some kind of loopholes in the walls or from the battlements.

"It was through here," said the duke, "that the garrison of the castle reached the advance posts established at the foot of the hill, by the river. This portion of the fortifications remains in a state of almost entire preservation; one side of the new church has been built against this wall, as also the vicarage. The chimney of your kitchen, Monsieur le Curé, is constructed a little farther on, in the same thickness of the wall. Hold," he said, advancing a few steps, "we are there."

At the moment they reached the place indicated, they distinctly heard the voices of two persons talking in the kitchen, seemingly near the fireplace. The flues permitted all that was said to be heard.

"Hush!" suddenly exclaimed the notary; "they are talking about the duke and the bailiwick of C——. Listen!"

"Merciful heaven!" replied the priest, in a mortified tone, "can it be already that gossiping Claudine? In spite of my express prohibitions, that woman will discuss and publish abroad every thing that passes in my house."

"Listen!" replied the duke, "we have, perhaps, some interest in this conversation. Although it may be, in general, very bad to listen at doors, yet, under certain circumstances, it becomes quite permissible to listen at chimneys."

"She is talking with her friend, Madame Jobard," said the priest: "a good woman enough, but with a curiosity that exceeds all bounds."

They kept profoundly silent, and heard the close of the conversation, from which they could very well judge what the commencement had been.

"Oh! yes, Miss Claudine," said Madame Jobard, "I

was *too* anxious when they told me yesterday, or last night rather, that this stranger had stopped at Monsieur le Curé's gate. It was not curiosity, I assure you, for I, *you* know very well, Claudine, *have* no curiosity ; but then, there are so many people in these times who impose on our good priests ! And, besides, I saw very well that man was disguised, and a man in disguise can have no good intentions. This is what I said to myself, you know ; and I was really so uneasy and so much disturbed, I haven't been able to close my eyes all night long ; and nothing in the world brought me over in such a hurry this morning but to find out what had happened. Now I can go away quite satisfied, since you tell me it was only the old judge of the bailiwick of C—. But, dear me ! do tell me now what has brought him here in this *disguise*, Miss Claudine ?"

" As to that, Madame Jobard, you need not ask me any more questions ; I don't know any thing about it, and I haven't even tried to find out. All that I *do* know is, that this stranger seems on very good terms with Monsieur le Curé and Masters Planart and Courlet ; that they talked last night until very late, and all this morning again they have been together. But now I do *beseech* you to say nothing of all this to nobody ; the curé would rate me severely if he knew I had told you."

" And who, now, do you take me for, Miss Claudine ? knowing, too, how much I think of you, and how much I honor and respect Monsieur le Curé, and that it would grieve me to the heart to think I had caused you or him the least bit of trouble ! "

" I believe you, Madame Jobard ; and it is because I know it so well is the reason I have spoken as freely as I have to you."

Here the two interlocutors went away from the fireplace, and their conversation could no longer be distinguished by the subterranean listeners.

Our four investigators then resumed their walk through the corridor. The curé was quite indignant at his housekeeper, and declared she should not remain twenty-four hours longer on his premises.

" You would act very unwisely," said the duke; " this woman is devoted and faithful, and you would find it a difficult matter to replace her. In times like these, a faithful servant is a real treasure. You know her fault ; if you are not able to correct it, use such precautions as will prevent this failing from injuring or annoying you. For instance, as in this case. I have found, as I said last night, the *ruse* of Monsieur Courlet a very fortunate arrangement ; and now that the imposition has been practiced, and whether Madame Jobard gossips or not, I confidently hope the real name of the traveler who arrived here last night will not be known in the country. Let us continue now our investigations ; we shall reach the end very soon."

A few steps farther, and the corridor grew wider, assuming almost the dimensions of a gallery, open to the heavens, and encumbered with ruins. It was the interior of a tower, the upper portion of which had been demolished ; but as the walls still remaining were hewn out of the solid rock, they were of course indestructible ; and there was no possible means of entering this tower except by the gallery of which we have spoken.

In exploring these ruins, they found a little door, which the duke opened with considerable difficulty. Another passage, more gloomy and narrower than those they had already traversed, presented itself before them. The

duke still acted as their guide, and very soon they found themselves in a kind of vaulted cavern, on the ground-floor of which traces of excavations still existed. "This cavern," said the duke, "was formerly the burial-vault of my family. The old church of the castle was built over it; but when that was demolished, the tombs found here were removed to the place where you have seen them. Now, our investigations are ended. I wished to make you acquainted with these subterranean passages, of the existence of which nobody is aware; the tradition has remained in my family, who confided the secret and guardianship to the Curé of Auvrigny, when they conferred on him this benefice. The secret had a double motive; first, to prevent the vulgar profanation of the tombs of my ancestors, and, secondly, to secure a retreat for members of the family in times of unjust persecution. Thus, for instance, under Cardinal Richelieu, a Viscount d'Auvrigny, implicated in the conspiracy of the Cinq-Mars, found here a secure refuge, and, concealed in these vaults, escaped the cardinal's vengeance. If duty to my country called me not to join the army of our princes, or if I could believe this tempest of revolution would prove but a passing cloud, I should probably determine to remain here, and between the tombs of my ancestors and the cradle of my son, await the return of better days; but we are, I firmly believe, only at the beginning of the revolutionary agitation, and we shall have fearful responsibilities and great perils to encounter before the re-establishment of law and order in our social edifice, now shaken to its very foundation. It is my duty then, under penalty of being considered unworthy the name I bear, and the noble device emblazoned on the shield of my illustrious ancestors, to assume my share of the labors and perils of

my country. But you, my friends, who are not called by duty to leave the kingdom, if it should happen—and in these calamitous times, it is necessary to anticipate and prepare for emergencies—that you should be forced to fly from the persecutions of those who are now in authority or those still more unscrupulous and dangerous men who aspire to attain it, you would here find an asylum that would prove invaluable to you. It was on this account, I did not wish to leave without first disclosing a secret which I feel will be none the less a secret of my family for being confided to those who are the last to sustain it, and its most devoted friends."

While talking, they had turned, and, retracing their steps, reached the vicarage, where the rest of the day was spent in making preparations for the morrow's departure. Father Planart had been careful to circulate the report, that he was going to Serqueux after his cousin's child, and the next morning at five o'clock, he and his wife set out in a carriage to make the journey.

At the same hour, the duke left the vicarage, and directed his steps toward Mirecourt, where he had arranged to meet Father Planart, but proceeding by another road through the forest, with which he was perfectly familiar. He met but two men on the route—one at the time of starting from the vicarage, the other as he entered the forest; but neither of them seemed to pay any attention to him. The duke scarcely remarked this incident, which, however, as we will see later, was followed by disagreeable consequences to an individual who was an entire stranger to all the parties concerned.

The remainder of the journey he accomplished successfully. Arriving at Bourbonne, the duke, after having tenderly embraced his son, placed him in the hands of

**Planart and his wife, who returned with the child to Auvrigny. In the mean time, the father journeyed sadly on toward the frontier, which he passed safely, accompanied by his faithful servant Fritz.**

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOW THE CURATE OF AUVRIGNY MANAGED TO REMAIN IN HIS PARISH DURING THE "REIGN OF TERROR."

THE car of revolution, which had at first advanced slowly, then gradually accelerated its speed, now, as if reaching a sudden declivity, dashed forward with the most frightful rapidity. To each day of outrage succeeded another more outrageous still. After the 21st of June came the 10th of August, then the 2d and 3d of September, then the 21st of January—all fatal dates, inscribed in the annals of France in characters of blood, and which were only the prelude to an epoch, every day of which was marked by massacres and crimes—a fearful era, to which history has given the characteristic appellation of the "Reign of Terror."

We have no intention of bringing before our reader's imagination the events of those times of horrible memory; but shall refer to them only as they may be connected with the personages we have introduced in our story.

From the insight we have already given into the characters of those personages, the effect produced on them by each new phase of the passing revolution may be readily divined.

While the village of Auvergny would be in a state of consternation and terror, a delirious joy animated the in-

habitants of the forges. The *Marseillaise*, the *Ça ira*, and other revolutionary songs resounded, day and night, in the streets and alehouses. None had welcomed the downfall of royalty and the proclamation of the republic with more ecstatic joy than Toussaint. Citizen Grospin, master of the forges, alone rivaled him in enthusiasm, and they both, in their several capacities of mayor and deputy, made it their business to read the decrees of the Assembly to the people, to preside at public festivals and patriotic reunions, and to excite by every means possible the zeal and civic ardor of their "fellow-citizens."

It was not long before the parish of Auvrigny became too narrow a theatre for the exercise of Citizen Grospin's republican virtues. He aspired to the honors of a national representative, and through the skillful management of his friend the deputy, and the influence his position as master of the forges gave him throughout the country, he succeeded in getting the district nomination, and was elected a member of the National Convention.

Again, on this occasion, Grospin displayed his grateful acknowledgments toward his indefatigable elector. He insisted on Toussaint accompanying him to Paris; promising to secure him some employment compatible with his ability and patriotism. Toussaint joyfully accepted the proposal, "happy," he said, "to go and refresh himself at the fountain-head of veritable democracy—to see and hear Marat and Danton and Robespierre, together with a host of others whose names were beginning to acquire an extended notoriety.

As to Citizen Grospin, he was by no means unwilling to have near him a man upon whose zeal and energy he could rely, a man whose advancement would be at once

remarked by "the people," and who, in case of need, would be his advocate and unflinching friend. For, as we have seen, Citizen Grospin was a prudent man; he did nothing without calculating the cost. He foresaw the stormy struggles which were to take place in the Assembly, of which he was a member, and in which he would have to participate. He had no intention of taking too open and decided a position, and wanted to have some one whose testimony could be used, if necessary, as a guarantee of his own civic spirit.

They departed, therefore, together, leaving in other hands the administration of the commune of Auvrigny. They nominated their own successors, who were unanimously accepted by the people. The head clerk of the forges was promoted to the office of mayor, and as his deputy they appointed Citizen Brulart, the same veritable cyclops of whom we have had occasion already to speak—a gross, ignorant man, who recognized nothing but brute force, and only in the sense, as he himself expressed it, of "knocking down and dragging out" an adversary.

However, under the new administration, the inhabitants of Auvrigny breathed a little more freely. The new mayor was formed only up to a certain point upon the model of his patron; he was not inclined to do evil from an excess of zeal, nor after deliberately calculating the advantages to be derived from it, but by temperament. He seemed to have been born for the position he had occupied for the last twenty years. Absorbed entirely and with every faculty intent upon the details connected with the working of a foundry which he understood to perfection, he was the best clerk they could possibly have employed; and yet he would have been entirely incapable of

acting as superintendent. The least initiative frightened him; he could do nothing but the work to which he was accustomed, or, at least, that which was clearly pointed out or explained to him, and then he accomplished it with energy and intelligence. Therefore, he consented to assume the position of mayor only on condition that his patron would give him the same explicit directions for exercising the duties of the office as he would have given him for the administration of the foundry during his absence. Among those instructions was found substantially this advice: "When the new mayor shall be called to execute the orders of the higher authorities, he will carefully avoid all undue severity or excess of zeal." There was no necessity, as we have said, for this recommendation; but he was not displeased at all that his patron had made it.

The inhabitants of Auvrigny found no cause to complain of the new administration; the deputy-marshal, although more brutal and coarser than Toustain, was a great deal less to be feared than he. The latter, in fact, exercised a strict police, or inquisition, by means of which he was informed of all that passed in the bosom of families, what were the private opinions of every member, what position each one had sustained with regard to certain circumstances, what strangers had come into the village, where they had been entertained, etc. In this way, he discovered that a stranger had appeared at the priest's on the 27th of February, and left on Wednesday, at five o'clock in the morning, after having passed the entire day of the 28th with the priest, the notary, and the old register Planart; and he was inclined to believe this individual was an agent of the *ci-devant* Duke d'Auvrigny, now living abroad. But he had not been able to discover

whether, as had been told him, that individual was really the old judge of the bailiwick of C—— or not, as his departure for Paris with Citizen Grospin compelled him to suspend investigations on the subject.

There was nothing to fear of this kind on the part of Brulart. A dull and stupid creature, he was incapable of entertaining two ideas; and could only become dangerous in case some one having influence over him had used it to excite him to acts of violence; then he would have "*come down*" with as little feeling or intelligence as the hammer he held in hand could be made to strike the anvil. He was like one of those enormous bulldogs who growl and bark, but only attack and bite at the command of their master. Now, that "master" was for the time Citizen Grospin or his representative, neither of whom were inclined to unmuzzle him.

It was the new mayor who was commissioned to notify the priest of Auvrigny of the decree ordering all priests who had not taken the oath to quit the limits of the parish and the department within eight hours, and the French territory within fifteen, under penalty of transportation to Cayenne. He accompanied this notification with numerous apologies, expressing to the priest the pain caused him by this rigorous measure. The latter thanked him for his polite consideration, without saying, however, whether or not he had conformed to the requirements of the law.

We will see later the style in which he conformed.

Very soon the invasion of France by the Prussians, and the departure of volunteers for the army, absorbed exclusively the public mind. Forty or fifty of the most violent and sanguine young men of Auvrigny parish started for the frontier. A great many of those who re-

mained behind, and who had at first ardently embraced the new political doctrines, began to fear they had gone too far ; they had expected to enjoy great benefits and privileges, and instead of their fortunes improving, they had never been so miserable in their lives before ; trade was destroyed, specie had disappeared, and the paper money replacing it was depreciating every day in value ; their provisions were impressed for supplying the army, their horses for remounting the cavalry ; their children were conscripted to make soldiers ; and in the midst of all these calamities, they were not even permitted to enjoy the consolations of religion, inasmuch as they were deprived of their priest, their natural consoler and spiritual friend.

Such were the reflections of those of the inhabitants of Auvrigny who had for the most part embraced the democratic party ; we can judge of the nature of the reflections of others.

But very soon the report was whispered around softly, and as a great secret, that the priest had not left the country, notwithstanding the orders of the Assembly ; he resided, however, no longer at the vicarage, for that had been closed like the church, and a placard fixed to the door of each, bearing these words, "GOVERNMENT PROPERTY." Let us say, in passing, to the honor of the inhabitants of Auvrigny, that those two pieces of property never found purchasers. But where was the curé ? Nobody could tell. A commission from the district of C—— had been sent, by virtue of a law passed the 29th of August, 1792, to make repeated domiciliary visits to all the inhabitants of the borough, and even a portion of the village of Auvrigny, but they had discovered nothing. However, it was certain the curé was concealed

somewhere, because from time to time he said mass, at which a number of the devoted faithful assisted. He had also baptized several infants, and administered the sacraments to a sick person in danger of death. But even those who assisted at his ministry were ignorant of his place of residence, or rather of the place in which he kept himself concealed. It was perhaps known to the physician, the old knight of St. Louis, Father Planart, and the notary, his intimate friends ; but they kept an impenetrable silence when interrogated on the subject. Mademoiselle Claudine herself, who lived now with Father Planart, where she seemed especially employed in taking care of "the little cousin from Serqueux," had exhibited a degree of prudence that astonished her best friends. Madame Jobart could not understand it at all, and ended by coming to the conclusion that Claudine was not a whit wiser than herself, which was the truth. As for the rest, the majority of the population, even among those who were reputed most ardent republicans, seemed little concerned. "On my honor," they would say, "after all, he has done just right to remain, if at the same time he knows himself to be entirely out of harm's way. He is a good man ; we have known him for twenty years ; we can testify that he has done nothing but good all his life, and if he stays among us now, it is surely not to do us any harm. Therefore, even if we should find out where he is concealed, we would never be the ones to denounce or betray him."

It is evident that if such were the sentiments of that portion of the population, the remainder were still more favorably inclined. Therefore the curé of Auvrigny passed the time of persecution in the midst of his flock, consoling them, sustaining their faith, administering the sacraments—in a word, exercising all the functions of his

ministry, as far as prudence would permit, without unnecessarily exposing his liberty and life. During all this time, it is true, the faithful of his parish exerted an active surveillance to avert the slightest danger that might threaten him, so that he suffered no serious apprehension throughout the entire "Reign of Terror," except on one occasion, as we shall relate hereafter.

While the commune of Auvrigny enjoyed a sort of negative tranquillity, when compared with the excitement reigning throughout the rest of France, two of the oldest of its inhabitants, in the mean time, each in different spheres, were thrown into the midst of the political whirlpool of the capital.

Citizen Grospin, on taking his place in the convention, was slightly embarrassed to know whether he should identify himself with the Girondists or the Montagnards. His votes during that time were the only expression of his opinions, as he never approached the tribune, and in his conversations scrupulously avoided expressing himself too explicitly—never, in fact, speaking except to say "nothing," and thus escape committing himself.

Such were the tactics he pursued until after the trial of Louis XVI. Some days before judgment was pronounced against that unfortunate monarch, he was adroit enough to have himself dispatched on a distant mission, that he might be absent at the moment of voting, and on his return could say to each of his colleagues of opposite opinions, "Had I been present, I should have voted just as you did." In the struggle between the Girondists and Jacobins, he declared himself entirely in accord with the latter; he took part in all those violent measures that signalized the triumph of the Jacobin party after the

31st of May, and for one entire year he remained faithful to that party.

Citizen Toussaint had advanced in a much more bold and open manner than his patron. On arriving at Paris, he identified himself with the Jacobin party, assiduously attended their meetings, finished his political education in that den of demagogism, and became, very soon, one of their most violent and ferocious orators.

It is well known that the Jacobins of Paris extended their ramifications throughout France, and that they had in every department clubs affiliated to the mother society of the capital. It is also well known that they often governed the convention itself, dictated its measures, and exercised a kind of surveillance over the representatives. More than once, Citizen Grospin was accused of luke-warmness, and indecision or "moderatism," as they expressed it. But Toussaint warmly defended him from the charge, and soon re-established him in the opinion of his friends and brothers. It is true, he left nothing undone to stimulate the zeal of his patron, and frequently said to him, with the familiarity and *tutoiement* (using *thee* and *thou*) so expressly recommended by the republican confraternity: "Take care, Citizen Grospin; thou dost not show thyself sufficiently zealous in the republican cause. I often hear such accusations raised against thee in our society. I have always defended thee because I am well convinced of thy patriotism, but it would be well for thee to defend thyself by thine actions hereafter."

"How by my actions? Have I not voted for the establishment of the revolutionary tribunal, for the law against absentees, the decree establishing the 'Committee of Public Safety'—in a word, for every measure considered most essential to the progress of the revolution?"

"That is all true—it is what I have told them, all the time; but they complain because you never speak in the tribune."

"Is it my fault if I am not an orator, like those blatant Girondist lawyers, and those excessive patriots, Robespierre and St. Just? Every body has not the gift of eloquence, and provided I *vote* right, of what importance is it, pray, whether I speak or not?"

At length the remonstrances of Toussaint began to weary his patron, who foresaw the extravagant follies and wild excesses of the revolution were approaching a climax that would very soon bring it to an end.

After the festival in honor of the Supreme Being, in which Robespierre had played the ridiculous rôle of high-priest, Grosvenor knew the power of that man was near its end, and he prepared not only not to be involved in his downfall, but to also adroitly extricate himself from the party. Toussaint's presence acted as a restraint upon his movements; he feared the sagacity of this man, who would readily comprehend his manœuvres, and as he could not hope to make him an accomplice, he resolved to have him removed from Paris. He obtained for him from the "Committee of Public Safety" the position of special commissioner and delegate, to search out those who were disaffected, or even under suspicion, and execute other revolutionary proceedings in the district of C—. Toussaint gratefully accepted the position, and promised to fulfill its requirements with all the zeal of a *sans-culotte*. When he took leave of Grosvenor, the latter gave him some commissions for his chief clerk, relative to the acquisition the said clerk had recently made, in the name of his employer, of the greater part of the forest belonging to the ancient manor of Auvrigny. But he volunteered no

recommendations with regard to the manner of exercising the functions of Toustain's office, knowing it would be useless. Toustain was not the man to listen to counsels of moderation, and, besides, Grosclin had his designs, as will be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER X.

### CITIZEN BRUTUS TOUSTAIN, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER AND DELEGATE, COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY—CONSE- QUENCES OF MADEMOISELLE CLAUDINE'S GOSSIPING.

THE 18th of June, 1794, or, as it was then called, “the 30th Prairial year II.,” at five o’clock in the morning, Monsieur Courlet galloped through the streets of Auvrigny, his horse all covered with sweat and foam, and stopped at the gate of Father Planart, who, with fork in hand, was just starting to the field to bring in a load of hay mown the previous evening.

“Back already!” he cried, the instant the notary set foot on the ground. “Why, something must have happened to make you return this morning; I had not expected you before night.”

“Let us go into the house,” replied the notary; “I have something to tell you.”

When the two friends were alone in the sitting-room, Courlet, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, commenced:

“Well, my dear friend, there has arrived among us a Commissioner and Delegate Extraordinary from the “Committee of Public Safety,” to search out those who are suspected of disloyalty to the republic, and especially refractory priests who have not left France, or who have

remained here since the law was passed condemning them to exile or transportation."

"We have had those commissioners here before," replied Father Planart calmly; "it is true they have not belonged to the district, and we have easily blinded and deceived them; but do you think, because this one has been sent from Paris, he will see more clearly, when the others from the country have failed to smell fire?"

"When you have heard the name of this delegate, you will perhaps not feel so well assured."

"Who is it then? any one I know?"

"It is none other than Citizen Brutus Toustain, our old deputy. At Paris, he is the factotum of our representative Grospin, to whom we are doubtless indebted for this fine complimentary present."

"You were right in saying I would not feel so confident on hearing his name; but when did he arrive?"

"To-day. He reached C—— day before yesterday. He has turned that village all upside down, made domiciliary visits, removed two of the town council, and last night announced positively at the club, that he would be in Auvrigny to-day. I had scarcely been there half an hour when I learned all these details. Consequently, I left the business that called me to the village, and started back as fast as my horse would bring me to tell you."

"You have done right, my friend. In this matter, we have no time to lose. I will go and arrange the curé's preconcerted signal; in the mean time, you will write him a note, stating all you have heard, and I will send it by our usual courier."

Father Planart immediately went up into his garret, opened a window looking toward the ruins of the old castle, and fastened the two shutters with a crossbar of

wood. An instant later, and a stone, which seemed to detach itself from the old wall, rolled down into the farm-yard. Father Planart hastened to descend, picked it up, and took from a hollow or cavity in the stone a small scrap of paper, on which was written these words, "What news have you heard?" Almost at the same instant, Master Courlet came with the note he had written ; Father Planart rolled it up, placed it securely in the hollow stone, and threw it entirely over the top of the old wall. A moment after, and two small stones fell at equal intervals, announcing to the two friends, who awaited the signal, that the message had been safely received.

"Let us go now," said Father Planart, "placing all things under the protection and in the hands of God. We must immediately warn our friends of the arrival of Citizen Toustain, the Commissioner-Extraordinary, and recommend them to be prudent and then hope for the best."

Toustain arrived in the evening, accompanied by a guard of police, who lodged in the old vicarage, now for a long time untenanted, and declared "government property," as already stated. His wife, whom he had not seen for nearly two years, hastened to meet him, with her two little children, the youngest of which was an infant of a few months at the time of his departure. Toustan, as we have said, was sincerely attached to his wife and children ; but being possessed with the idea that nothing must divert him from his duties as a citizen, and the difficult task confided to him, he received them with such coldness and seeming indifference, that his poor wife returned in sadness and tears to her home. He visited her, only after having held a long conference with the mayor, and convening the National Guard for the next day.

At an early hour, the entire parish was in a state of

commotion. Drums loudly beating called the National Guards to assemble, and the commissioner of the Committee of Public Safety returned to the vicarage where he had established his headquarters. He was accompanied by the deputy, Brulart, dressed in his working jacket, tied round the waist with a tri-colored scarf, and wearing on his head an enormous red hat; he insisted on carrying the hammer which was scarcely ever out of his hand; but Toustain forbade him, and tried to make him understand his motive for the interdiction. Brulart obeyed, without being capable of comprehending any thing of his chief's explanation, however.

The commissioner, accompanied by his deputy and two gendarmes, commenced immediately their domiciliary visits, and not a family in the village escaped. The houses of Father Planart, and Courlet, the old physician, and the Knight of St. Louis, De Blossac, the officer of whom we have already spoken, but who was now called simply "Citizen Blossac," were the especial objects of Toustain's investigations. He searched them from garret to cellar, had closets and the most private places opened, sounded the walls, and measured their thickness to be sure they had not contrived some hiding-place in the interior. He informed no one as to the object of these strict researches, and nobody dared question him; but it was well understood he was trying to discover the retreat of the priest.

These operations continued for two or three days; after which, he returned to the chief town of the district, announcing the time of his next visit, and leaving installed in the vicarage the police force, whom he instructed to carefully watch the movements of certain individuals whom he designated as under suspicion.

Two days after, he returned, followed by a new police guard, bringing with them a prisoner. The commissioner had this man shut up in one of the apartments of the vicarage ; he then summoned Father Planart and the notary Courlet. When the two men arrived, he brought them in presence of the prisoner, and demanded if they knew him.

"It is Citizen Reinier," they replied, without hesitation, "the former judge of the bailiwick of C——."

"Ah well!" quickly answered Toustain, addressing himself to the individual called Citizen Reinier, "you hear them, and yet you have pretended not to know these men?"

"I still insist that I do not. As to these gentlemen, it is not surprising they have recognized me ; I have for a sufficiently long period been judge of C—— for my face to have become familiar to a great many people who have had business with me, as magistrate, without my being acquainted with those persons or able even to recognize them. However," he continued, after a moment's consideration, "one of these two citizens I remember having seen in court, where, I believe, he testified in some case brought before me—I can not recollect now what. That is the man," he continued, pointing to Courlet, "but I can not even recall his name. As to the other, he is entirely unknown to me."

"Was it a long time since?" inquired Toustain.

"At least seven or eight years ago."

"Ah, indeed ! Well, I insist that you have seen them both in a little more than two years—that you have spent an evening and an entire day with them in this identical house."

"This is the first time," affirmed the ex-judge, "that I

have ever set foot in this house, and it is now more than ten years since I have been in Auvrigny."

Hearing Toustain's assertion, Planart and Courlet exchanged an inquiring glance. The commissioner surprised them in the act, and catching the significant look, called out in an imperious manner, "Stop making signs between you, citizens, or I shall declare you under arrest on the spot as suspicious characters; but to prevent all connivance in your answers, I shall interrogate you separately. Citizen Courlet, go into the next room. Gendarmes, remain with the citizen until I summon him again."

When Courlet had retired, the commissioner continued: "Let us see, Citizen Planart, although you have not passed for a good patriot, I have always considered you an honest man, loyal, and incapable of falsehood. Now, have you not had an interview in this house, in the last two years, or thereabout, with Citizen Reinier?"

"No. I know Citizen Reinier only by sight, and have never exchanged a word with him in my life."

"Be careful what you say, because I have proof to the contrary; but perhaps your memory is at fault, and to better locate the facts, I will recall the precise dates. On the evening of the 27th of February, 1792, was Citizen Reinier not introduced in disguise into the vicarage? Did you not pass the entire day of the 28th with him, together with the priest, and your friend the notary, Courlet?"

"I can only repeat what I have already said; I have never in my life spoken to Citizen Reinier, on that day nor any other."

"Beg your pardon, Citizen Commissioner," interrupted the ex-judge; "but if, when you arrested me, you had made known the cause of the measure, and given me pre-

cise dates, as you have just now done, I should have readily been able to produce an alibi, proving that on the day in question I was more than twenty leagues from Auvrigny."

"We will see into that hereafter," replied Toustain in an irritable manner, "and shall then examine if the proofs of your pretended alibi are stronger than those establishing your presence here on the day in question."

He then recalled M. Courlet, whose testimony in every particular corroborated that of Father Planart.

Toustain, evidently very much disconcerted, then entered upon a most rigid and minute investigation with respect to the report that had been for two years in circulation, relative to the mysterious appearance of the ex-judge of C—— at Auvrigny. He persistently dwelt on this point, and in a most violent manner declared that he believed in the existence of a conspiracy, and he intended to discover the plot. He was sure, perfectly sure, that on the morning of the 29th of February, 1792, a mysterious individual had left the vicarage of Auvrigny. It was Toustain, by the way, who had met the duke just as he entered the forest on his departure.

We have spoken also of another man who had noticed the stranger leaving the vicarage. This was a farmer named Wilmot, a most inoffensive person, and extremely devoted to the priest. He supposed it was the curé himself, going out at this early hour, and had very naturally spoken of it to his wife. The latter observed that the priest had no longer a horse, and, besides, he had said mass as usual at seven o'clock that morning. More curious than her husband, she at once started out to investigate the matter; she first addressed herself to Madame Jobard, Claudine's friend, and that worthy confidante re-

lated to her, as a great secret, all that she knew. Wil-mot's wife hurried off to whisper the secret to two or three of her friends, and before night all the parish had heard the story.

It was, as we see, a repetition of La Fontaine's fable, "The Women and the Secret!" and, unfortunately, that fable is always found applicable, and true to the life.

By means of patient and persistent research, the com-missioner succeeded in tracing the originators of this re-port, Madame Jobard and Mlle. Claudine, who were both summoned to appear before him, in his audience-cham-ber, the vicarage kitchen.

The consternation of poor Claudine and her indigna-tion against her friend Madame Jobard must be left to the reader's imagination.

She acknowledged every thing ; but on being con-fronted with the prisoner, she failed to recognize him as the person who had spent two days and a night with her master, at the time specified.

Questioned and cross-questioned, she acknowledged that she scarcely knew Citizen Reinier at all, and had only affirmed it to be him because they had told her so.

Monsieur Courlet being present at the examination, confirmed the testimony of Claudine. "It was I, Citizen Commissioner," he said, "who told Claudine this story, without ever supposing it could have been followed by such disagreeable consequences to Citizen Reinier. I now most heartily regret that it should have happened ; and if you have arrested the ex-judge only because of his sup-posed visit to the vicarage at the time specified in your accusation, it is but just that you should restore him to liberty, and I am ready to make all possible reparation for the wrong I have unintentionally done him."

"Admitting, for the present," replied Toustain, "that the individual in question was not the prisoner here present, it is nevertheless a certain fact, and neither you nor Citizen Planart can deny it, that a stranger arrived, as I have said, at the vicarage, sojourned there and departed mysteriously; also that you have been in conference with him and the ex-priest. Is that not true? Answer, Citizen Planart, yes or no?"

"It is true," replied Planart, calmly.

Monsieur Courlet made the same response.

"Well, since, according to your own testimony, this individual was not Citizen Reinier, who was it?"

Planart and Courlet remained silent. Urged by the commissioner, they declared they had no authority to reveal the name of that individual.

"Well, I conclude," cried Toustain, "from your refusing to give the name, that it was an agent of that absent enemy of our country, the ex-duke of Auvrigny; I also conclude, that, conjointly with him and the ex-priest of Auvrigny, you have been plotting some conspiracy against the revolution; consequently, I declare you under arrest as suspicious characters. Gendarmes, secure these two men."

A terrified shudder ran through the entire assembly, as the greater number of the inhabitants had been summoned, or had come to witness the examination. Planart's wife uttered a cry of distress; Claudine wrung her hands, and wept bitterly, while Madame Jobard with sobs and groans concealed her mortification behind an immense handkerchief with which she covered her face.

As soon as the confusion had somewhat subsided, and order was partially restored, Toustain, apparently moved

to compassion, addressed the audience in a tone which he endeavored to soften into kindness :

“Citizens of Auvrigny,” he began, “I have lived long enough among you to know and esteem you ; believe me when I say I love you all as brothers ; that my heart is sorely tried seeing I shall be forced to use against you that severity to which my mission too often obliges me to resort. It is here especially, and above all other places, that I should have been pleased to lay aside the rigor of my official character, and give myself up, without restraint, to the endearments of my family and the society of my friends ; but, citizens, I am, first of all, a republican, and I am ready to sacrifice my own individual interests and affections to the interests and salvation of my country. I have adopted the name of Brutus instead of Remi, the name given me at my birth, and now, like Brutus, I am ready to sacrifice my children, if necessary, to save the republic !

“I have come among you, citizens, animated by the most fraternal sentiments. I had hoped, during the two years which have passed since I left you, that your republican education would have been completed ; unfortunately, I find it is no farther advanced than before my departure ; but I know the cause of this evil, and the object of my visit here now is principally for the purpose of remedying it. The evil I refer to is caused by the presence among you of a fanatical priest, who has for so many years indoctrinated you and kept your eyes blind-folded with the bandage of superstition. The worship he has imposed on you, the religion he has taught you today, no more exists ; we have decreed its abolition, and have instituted in its stead the worship of Reason and the religion of the Supreme Being.

"The presence of this man among you is an act of rebellion against the laws, and in suffering it, you become to some extent his accomplice, without considering that those who aid or abet in concealing him incur the penalty of death. Drive out, then, from your midst this dangerous and corrupt creature, deliver him up to the sword of the law, and you will merit the gratitude of your country; you will then find in me, instead of the severe and implacable delegate from the Committee of Public Safety, a compatriot and a friend, always ready to fraternize with each one of you. Hoping that you may listen to the voice of reason, I will suspend for to-day the domiciliary visits. To-morrow, at this hour, I shall meet you here. I sincerely hope, before that time, the hiding-place of this refractory priest will have been discovered, and he delivered into my hands. There is no need of my repeating what I have already said: the most profound secrecy will be observed with regard to the name of the informer, if he desires it, and he will be rewarded besides in a manner proportionate to the service he shall have rendered to the republic."

The entire assemblage retired in a state of profound consternation. Planart and Courlet were placed under guard, together with the ex-judge of C—.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PRIEST'S LETTER—THE ESCAPE—RAGE OF THE CITIZEN COMMISSIONER.

THE crowd next day was far more numerous than that of the day before, every one being impatient to know what effect the encouragement given by the commissioner would have in securing the desired information. Every one felt sure of himself, but not able to answer for his neighbor.

It is true, none but Planart and Courlet were informed of the priest's place of concealment, but the people were not aware of this fact, and feared some unforeseen revelation might come from an unexpected quarter.

At the appointed hour, Toustain arrived. His gloomy and serious expression gave his audience to understand that he had been disappointed in his expectations. Glances of satisfaction were cautiously exchanged between them ; hands were silently pressed in the crowd, and all waited with redoubled apprehension what was to follow.

Toustain had scarcely seated himself at the table that served as a desk, when the postmaster of Auvrigny approached, and handed him a letter which he had found, he said, that moment in his letter-box.

After reading it, Toustain demanded of the postmaster, “ What time do you suppose this letter was put in the box ? ”

"It must have been put there last night after nine o'clock; at that hour, I make my last collection of letters."

"Why have you not delivered it sooner?"

"Because I make up the mails but twice a day—in the morning at eight o'clock, in the evening at nine. I found it this morning, and seeing under the superscription the words, '*Very urgent,*' I did not give it to the carrier, who has a long turn to make, but hastened to bring it to you myself."

"Do you recognize the handwriting of the address?"

"I have not looked at it particularly."

"Take a better look then this time. I know you are familiar with the writing of every body in the parish—at least of those who are in the habit of writing often. Tell me if you recognize this hand?"

He gave the closed letter to the postmaster, who, after closely examining the address, replied, "I believe it is the handwriting of the Abbé Lefranc, the former priest of the parish."

At this announcement, a murmur of astonishment ran through the entire assembly. Toussaint took the letter from the postmaster, and glancing for a moment over the multitude, said, "You are astonished, citizens; you believe, perhaps, the citizen postmaster is mistaken; but no, this letter is really from your old priest, and to prove my impartiality and the purity of my intentions, I shall read it to you."

At these words, a profound silence fell on the assembled multitude, each one of whom waited with painful anxiety to hear what their priest would have to write to Toussaint. They were not kept long in suspense, as the

latter began at once to read the letter, which ran as follows :

“CITIZEN COMMISSIONER :

“ You will doubtless be astonished at seeing my name affixed to this letter, and you will probably be still more surprised after reading the proposition I herein make you.

“ I would first say to you that it is very wrong for Citizen Reinier to have been arrested on the charge of having visited me during the latter part of February, 1791, or at any other time ; what he has told you is strictly true. Never since I have occupied the vicarage of Auvrigny, has the ex-judge of C—— entered my house.

“ All that Citizens Planart and Courlet have said on the subject of the visit made by a stranger at that time is equally true ; only they have not felt authorized to reveal his name ; but I am not constrained by the same scruples, and I declare to you that this individual was not an agent of the refugees, nor of the Duke d’Auvrigny, but actually the Duke d’Auvrigny himself.”

A burst of astonishment arose from his audience, and interrupted the reader for a moment. It ceased almost instantly, and Toussaint continued :

“ After this avowal, I should hasten to add, that the duke came directly to my house, and by chance found there Citizens Planart and Courlet, neither they nor myself having been apprised of his coming ; that far from being engaged in plotting treason or conspiring against the revolution, the duke had entertained us entirely with the affairs of his own family. He came to France simply for the purpose of removing his child, whom he had left in the vicinity of Chateau-Thierry, a fact easily verified. On his return, as he passed in the neighborhood of Au-

vigny, he felt inclined to pay a last visit to the home of his ancestors ; he had left his son in charge of a servant who had accompanied him. After having accomplished his pilgrimage to the tomb of his forefathers, he departed to take up his abode in a foreign land, and since that time no person, that I am aware of, has received intelligence from or written to him.

"This is, Citizen Commissioner, the simple story, and the true facts as they have occurred. I can not see where you would be able to find material for the slightest accusation against Citizens Reinier, Planart, and Courlet ; the first a perfect stranger, the other two having only been accidental participants in the affair.

"If any one is guilty, it is myself alone. I alone have harbored or extended to him the hospitalities of my house, and I am well aware that it has been pronounced an actual crime to give shelter to one of the proscribed.

"Ah well ! here, now, is the proposition I wish to make you : I propose to deliver up to you the guilty man, which means myself, if you will pledge your word to set at liberty three honorable fathers of families—namely, the Citizens Reinier, Planart, and Courlet. I know you well enough, Citizen Commissioner, to be persuaded that if you accept this engagement, you will keep it.

"I am well aware of the fate to which I expose myself in surrendering, and that it would prove a grave and serious charge, having given shelter more than two years ago to a proscribed fellow-countryman ; but I shall at least relieve my parishioners from the annoyances to which my presence will constantly expose them. I shall also save from an accusation that may result in terrible consequences three innocent men ; and shall also have fulfilled the duty of the good shepherd, who gives his life

for his sheep. You will appreciate, I hope, Citizen Commissioner, the confidence I have reposed in the loyalty of your character, and that confidence, I am sure, will not be misplaced.

“I salute you fraternally in Jesus Christ,

“LEFRANC,

“*Priest of Auvrigny.*”

During the reading of this letter, many secret tears had flowed, and more than one sigh been stifled; but when Toustain ceased, they could no longer restrain their feelings; loud sobs burst from all parts of the house, and numerous voices cried out, “No! no! he must not give himself up! He shall never surrender himself, it would only be to ascend the guillotine! Let them arrest us if they choose—let them cast us into prison—we are ready to go; but not him—never, never!”

Toustain tried in vain to restore order; he at length made a sign to his deputy, Brulart, who in a stentorian voice pronounced a formidable “Silence!” accompanied by a formidable blow with his fist, that nearly crushed the table on which it fell.

Silence being restored, the commissioner, in a tone of disdainful authority, continued :

“I could not have believed, people of Auvrigny, that you were fanatical to such an extreme as this. What! will you permit yourselves to be caught by the honeyed words of this hypocritical priest? As for myself, I can not be duped by his beautiful sentiments of candor and generosity, any more than by the compliments he pays me on the loyalty of my character. Without doubt, if I promised to restore these prisoners to liberty, on condition that he should surrender himself to the authorities, I would keep my word, because a true republican would not

forfeit his word, even in dealing with an enemy. But the republic would not accede to any such arrangement. Whether the prisoners are guilty or whether they are not, is for the law to judge, and not for me to decide. I could not myself restore them to liberty, only in case I was shown material and authentic proof of their innocence. For example, in the matter concerning Citizen Reinier, I have this morning received from the district of C—— authentic documents effectively establishing the fact of his having been at Colmar during the eight last days of February, and the first fifteen days of March, 1792. His alibi being thus proven, I shall of course issue an order for his release. As to the Citizens Planart and Courlet, it has been sufficiently proven that they have had dealings with some proscribed refugee, whether the *ci-devant* Duke of Auvrigny, or any other, the arrest of this refractory priest, Lefranc, would not be sufficient to exculpate them from the charge. Consequently, they shall remain in prison until the law pronounces on their case. As to the ex-priest of Auvrigny, I am not deceived by his pretended show of generosity; he knows that he is at the end of his *ruse*, that he can no longer escape me, and he wishes, for the benefit of his accomplices, to avail himself of an act of forced submission by trying to make it appear a voluntary one.

“This is my reply to his letter. I can not transmit it directly to him, as he has forgotten to give me his address; but I know it will reach him with the same facility with which the details of all that has occurred in our preceding meetings have done, although I have not sent him an official report.

“I will add, finally, in the form of a postscript, that I shall not leave Auvrigny until I have discovered and

arrested him, and I pledge myself to conduct him with his accomplices, and all other enemies of the republic, if I can discover them, to be arraigned before the tribunal at Paris."

This threat produced on the multitude an impression difficult to describe. Toustain, without appearing to notice the effect of his words, called the ex-judge Reinier, and assured him he was at liberty to depart. He then dismissed the assembly, making them immediately evacuate the hall. He himself only took his departure after having ordered the gendarmes to watch their prisoners, and allow no one to communicate with them, except in their presence. He ordered a brigadier to see that nobody entered the room, except the person who brought their food, and to charge one of the gendarmes to remain in the room all the time that person should be there.

The inhabitants of Auvrigny returned to their homes, with consternation written on their faces, and desolation reigning in their hearts. Every one trembled for himself, but very much more for their worthy pastor; and the most fervent prayers were offered up to God that he might be prevented from falling into the hands of his enemies.

The next day, an unexpected event occurred, producing a wonderful diversion in the general feeling of misery that prevailed, and giving them a ray of hope.

Toustain had returned at an early hour to the prison—that is, to the vicarage, to interrogate Planart and Courlet more particularly on the subject of the duke's visit. But what was his astonishment, when the door of their apartment was opened by the guards, to find his prisoners gone!

To his astonishment succeeded an excess of rage, such as can only be supposed attainable by a man of similar

violent passions. He abandoned himself to the most frightful imprecations, then to threats against the gendarmes, whom he declared should be immediately shot.

The poor gendarmes were terror-stricken, but dared not utter a word. However, whilst he was indulging in this transport of rage, one of them continued to search the apartment throughout, opening closets and cupboards, knocking at all the doors, and looking up the chimney to see if some indications might not be discovered of the manner in which the prisoners had escaped.

Suddenly he uttered a cry of triumph: "Ah ! Citizen Commissioner, I have found the hole through which our birds have flown ! Come, look here !"

The commissioner and the other guard quickly approached ; in a little cabinet, at the head of the alcove in which the prisoners had slept, and which served as a wardrobe, a small door was cut, opening into a passage. It was the passage we have mentioned as conducting to the sacristy.

The commissioner, followed by the gendarmes, at once entered the opening, and was soon in the sacristy. There they found the closet open by which the duke had descended, with the priest and his friends, into the family vault. They would have followed the same route, but the darkness forced them to return for torches.

As soon as they had procured lights, they descended into the crypt, which we have before described ; they searched in every direction, but found nobody. They then sounded the entire length of the walls, to see if some opening could not be discovered by which the fugitives might have escaped ; they found nothing, however, but the rough and massive stone-work of the solid walls.

It will appear later why they were unable to find the

little door by which the duke had conducted his guests into the upper galleries, or covered passage-way constructed in the thick walls of the old fortifications.

At length, after a quarter of an hour's useless search, they noticed that near the stairway by which they had descended, the earth, which elsewhere returned a dull, heavy sound, resounded under their feet as if they were walking on a floor covering a deep cavern. They lowered their torches, and soon discovered a square trap-door, one side of which was furnished with a movable iron ring, evidently intended to raise the door, and which, when it was closed, fitted in a groove, so as not to project above the face of the wood. One of the gendarmes raised this ring, passed his hand through it, and lifted up the door without difficulty. The facility with which he accomplished this operation, the absence of dust on the hinges by which this square platform was attached to the freestone rock, and numerous other indications that would consume too much time to mention, made it clearly evident that the trap-door had been recently opened.

The square entrance which presented itself before them disclosed a stairway similar to the one leading from the sacristy. The rush of damp air announced that this stairway might lead to subterranean vaults of much greater depth than the one in which they found themselves.

"This time," cried the commissioner joyfully, "I believe I am on the trail of our game. Ah! Monsieur le Curé, you have tried to outwit me; you should have known, however, that you have encountered an experienced huntsman! We will see, in the end, if you are able to foil an old bloodhound like me. It is useless," he continued, "for you all to follow; one of you can descend with me, in case my torch should be extinguished. I am

going to see if my suspicions are well founded ; it will require but a few minutes, and then I will rejoin you here."

The stairway formed a spiral, like that in the tower, so that from the second turning, those at the top lost sight of the torchlight. In about five minutes, a feeble gleam announced the return of the explorers, and a few moments later they had landed at the top of the stairway.

Toustain then made them close the trap-door, saying, "All goes well ; my suspicions are confirmed, and I hope this time we will get them. Now, let us go back."

They remounted the stairs to the sacristy, where Toustain placed a guard of gendarmes. With the others, he returned to the vicarage ; then, without losing time, he selected several National Guards, on whom he could rely, and sent them, with two gendarmes, to guard the two mountain entrances to the vaults—one of which was almost in the village, the other at some distance in the country.

He then explained to the corporal his reasons for all these precautions. "The mountain on which the castle is built," he said, "is perforated by numerous subterranean vaults or caverns, known only to a small number of the inhabitants of the parish ; because the others, either through fear or superstition, have never dared to venture in them. I have often explored and am generally familiar with them, though I have not visited them all. For a long time, I believed the curate had sought refuge there, but I did not wish to manifest this suspicion before having acquired some certain information. I also believed, and correctly, that he had not introduced himself by the two usual modes of ingress, and waited to discover the mystery of the secret entrance. To-day, accident has ordered it according to our wishes. Not succeeding in

making me fall into the snare he had laid for me, and saving his accomplices by delivering himself up with a false display of magnanimity, he imagines he will be able to succeed in saving them, in spite of me, and himself perhaps with them. Therefore, he has found nothing better than to make them escape by the secret opening, which leads from the vicarage into the subterranean vaults with which he alone is acquainted. I confess, brigadier, that you could never have suspected the existence of such an avenue of escape, and you are fully exonerated from the charge of negligence with which I accused you this morning. He supposed we would not be able to discover his trail, but he forgot he was dealing with jolly bold fellows, who were in the habit of foiling other people's stratagems. Now, it remains for us to bring to a successful termination a plan so well begun. We go to search the vaults, and if our men are still there (as I presume them to be, for where else could they go ?) they can not escape us. If they have left the vaults, they must have betaken themselves to the woods, which contain a multitude of by-places, thickets, and small caves, that could be used for hiding-places ; but there is not one of those places which is not perfectly familiar to me, and I would undertake to find them more readily there than in the mountain-caverns, having followed more than once the track of small game in those forests, and these men would leave, to experienced eyes like mine, traces certainly more visible than the tracks of a hare. At all events, we have them safe."

After coming to this conclusion, he sent for wine, with which he treated the gendarmes and National Guards, in order to inspire them with courage before putting them on the trail of his game ; they then set out, entirely sanguine of success.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE HUNTER FOILED—DOWNFALL OF CITIZEN ROBES-  
PIERRE AND CITIZEN BRUTUS TOUSTAIN—JOY OF  
THE PRIEST'S FRIENDS—MELANCHOLY EVENT CAUS-  
ING SORROW.

WHEN the escape of the prisoners became known in the village, it gave rise to an irresistible impulse of joy, counteracted, however, by the presence of the ferocious commissioner. But when they remarked the cheerfulness and gayety of that individual, and the assurance with which he announced that in twenty-four hours he would capture the three fugitives, their joy was changed into dread and apprehension. They trembled anew for the unfortunate captives, and commenced with redoubled fervor to offer up prayers to God for their deliverance.

Toustain, however, had lost no time. Surrounded by the most sanguine patriots of the forges, escorted by Citizen Brulart (who had permission on this occasion to carry his hammer), accompanied besides by two hounds of the keenest scent, and trained to the chase, he searched with scrupulous care through all the windings of the mountain caverns. He had divided his troop into two bands—one taking the stairway leading into the crypt of the church, the other starting from the entrance out in

the country. The third entrance was guarded by a detachment of gendarmes.

After two hours' fruitless search, the two bands met at the cavern called the "Counterfeiter's Workshop." Toustain was a little disconcerted ; he was not discouraged, however, and gave new orders to recommence the search. The entire day was spent in scouring the galleries, that intersected each other in every direction ; veritable labyrinths, of which none can form an adequate idea except those who have visited the Catacombs of Paris, or the immense stone quarries that have been wrought on the banks of the Cher, and numerous other localities.

The first day, nothing was accomplished, unless it was to put Commissioner Toustain in a very bad humor. They recommenced the next day and the day after, without obtaining other results. Toustain's vexation visibly increased.

He then began to explore the forests, without, however, abandoning the search in the subterranean vaults, because, he said, "It is *there* they will be found at last, I am sure." But they vainly beat the forests, without discovering the slightest trace of the fugitives.

After eight days of fruitless labor, Toustain began to despair of success. His ill humor had reached the point at which it was converted into rage. Not knowing on whom or what to vent his fury, one day, as he passed through the church, in returning from one of his fruitless visits to the vaults, he observed that the statues of the saints, the sculptured cross, and other objects of worship had remained uninjured since they closed the church. He immediately ordered Citizen Brulart to destroy every thing in the building, and the latter, happy at last to be allowed the use of his hammer, very soon mutilated or

destroyed every thing displaying any trace of Christian art, which had so long been the object of the veneration of the faithful.

This act of vandalism seemed to exasperate the people of the village against him. Not that they knelt and called down the vengeance of God on his impiety, but they launched out into bitter railings against a powerful "delegate," who was only able to avenge his ill-fortune, in not discovering the escaped prisoners, by mutilating images of stone, etc.

These speeches being reported to him by some of his trusty followers and confidential friends, his fury knew no bounds. "Ah!" he cried, in savage tone and with a sardonic smile, "they will discover before long, whether I only know how to avenge myself on statues and stones."

He at once issued an order for the arrest of five of the most prominent men in the parish, besides the wives of Planart and the notary, Courlet. The next day, he had the physician and the old Chevalier of St. Louis arrested, although the latter had been confined to his bed for several months with rheumatism. "What have they to fear from a poor old invalid like me?" said he to the gendarmes sent to arrest him. "You will only be changing my prison, for I have for a long time now been a prisoner in my own chamber." The soldiers, before proceeding farther, thought it best to report the condition of this man, who was unable to walk, to the commissioner.

"By what right do you permit yourselves to question my orders? If he does not conspire with his legs, he conspires with his tongue; therefore, since he is unable to walk, let him be carried!" And they carried him to the new provisional prison Toustain had established in his

own house, in order to keep strict guard over his prisoners.

By this time, consternation and trouble were at their height in the parish of Auvrigny. Nothing was talked of but the new arrests taking place day after day, and they were really at a loss to know to which saint they should address their invocations, when relief came to them from a source they little expected.

The Mayor of Auvrigny, as has been remarked, had kept entirely aloof from the "Delegate of the Committee of Public Safety." He avoided the requisitions Toustain had served on him, under the pretext that the works of the forge demanded all his time and attention. Toustain gave him to understand, however, that private interests should give way before the interests of the government; but the mayor responded triumphantly that he worked for the interest of the republic, being at that moment employed, by command of the Minister of War, in executing an immense order for bullets, shells, and bombs, required for the army of the republic, and the least interruption in an undertaking of this kind must seriously compromise the success of their arms. Toustain did not persist; he took care to treat with great consideration and deal very gently with the deputy of his colleague Grospin, to whom he felt under infinite obligations. He therefore contented himself with the adjunct Brulart, as the representative of municipal authority.

But the deputy of Citizen Grospin kept up a daily correspondence with his patron; he did not confine himself to discussing the affairs of the forges, but wrote besides, day after day, reporting the deeds and exploits of his old protégé.

The last letter, in which he gave an account of the con-

sternation and terror Toustain had caused throughout the country, the numerous arrests he had made, and especially the brutal imprisonment of the old Chevalier of St. Louis, reached Paris on the 10th Thermidor, just the day following the downfall of Robespierre, of the Committee of Public Safety, of the Jacobin Club—in a word, of the “Reign of Terror” *in toto*.

Representative Grospin had strongly contributed to the overthrow of the terrorist party, although it was through their influence he had been, in the beginning, elevated to power. Now, rallying to the support of the victorious party, he exerted himself to give his new friends evidences of the sincerity of his new opinions.

On receiving his agent's letter, Citizen Grospin hastened to obtain an order from the new provisional government recalling Toustain to Paris, there to render an account of his conduct, and commanding all those to be restored to liberty whom he had incarcerated during his mission.

When the order of the provisional government reached Auvrigny, the people rejoiced with an indescribable joy. The prisoners were conducted in triumph to their homes, amid shouts of “Long live our Representative Grospin!” “Down with Toustain!” The representative had been careful to make known the part he had taken in the proceedings of the 9th Thermidor; and the good, simple people regarded him as the sole author of the downfall of Robespierre. Grospin, always far-sighted, was now working to obtain their votes at the next election.

Toustain, dismayed, but not believing the overthrow of his party to be so complete as represented, stole away in the night, telling some of his confidential associ-

ates that he would return very soon, to take a terrible revenge.

In the evening, Father Planart and the notary returned quietly to their homes. "Where had they been?" Nobody knew, nor could conjecture. When interrogated on the subject, they simply replied, that they had spent all the time they were absent with the curé, but it was useless to question them any farther.

Prudence required the priest to remain still in his retreat; they understood then that the secret of that retreat (to which he owed his salvation) was not to be revealed, and henceforth every one abstained from approaching the subject.

But we, who have not the same motives for discretion, will give our readers some details concerning his place of concealment, in order that they may understand how Toussaint had been "put off the track," in spite of the sagacity of the "bloodhound," upon which he had so much vaunted himself. After the departure of the Duke d'Auvrigny, the priest and his two friends had often visited the crypt, either in hiding the treasures confided to them, or to better reconnoitre the place, destined, in case of necessity, to serve as an asylum, and to fit it up for that purpose; because the march of events made it very evident that such a place of refuge might soon be required.

In exploring the burial-vault, they discovered the trap-door and stairway communicating with the caverns in the mountain. This was a ray of light to them. It was probable that, knowing the curate to be concealed in the country, the commissioner would at once suppose he had retired into the vaults communicating with the sacristy, then with the vicarage, because men, even of little experience, could not fail to discover all those entrances. In

the same way, they would also discover the little door placed in an angle of the cavern, by which the duke had conducted them to the galleries above. It would be necessary, therefore, to destroy or conceal all traces of that entrance, and find another.

After continuous searching, they at length discovered that an old dove-cot or pigeon-house, which they reached from the garret of the vicarage, had been constructed against the antiquated wall of the fortifications. From one of the windows of this dove-cot they were enabled by means of a ladder to reach the top of the old wall, where they found a platform, and from that easily gained the galleries. To insure greater safety, after reaching the platform, they could draw up the ladder, and thus find themselves completely isolated.

Nothing more was necessary in order to complete this isolation than to wall up the little door of the vault already mentioned. The curate and his two friends went to work, and closed up the door by a wall of stone, which they constructed themselves, the masonry being entirely in keeping with that of the rest of the crypt. After their work was completed, they removed from the cavern the chest containing the remains of the duke's treasure, and carried it to the upper galleries. We have said the "remains" of the treasure, because the greater portion, about fifty thousand francs, had been appropriated by Planart to the purchase, in his own name, of three of the most beautiful farms belonging to the ancient domain of Auvrigny. At the same time, he had deposited in the chest a letter, stating that these acquisitions had been made for the benefit of the Duke d'Auvrigny, with money that belonged to him. All these precautions had been carried out, as we have seen, with the happiest results; which the priest

and his friends attributed less to their own foresight and good management than the wonderful protection of God.

Quiet being restored throughout the country, the priest was able to show himself occasionally without danger to his parishioners, and give them spiritual aid and consolation, without the slightest apprehension.

But unhappily, the joy our three worthy friends had begun to experience was dispelled by one of the most deplorable calamities. During the summer of 1795, that terrible epidemic scourge, the smallpox, began its fearful ravages in the parish of Auvrigny. The use of vaccination had not then been discovered, and the plague made numberless victims. The duke's little son was one of the first to be attacked, and in about ten days died of the malady. Father Planart and his wife were inconsolable, and could not have mourned more deeply the loss of one of their own children, and in this grief the priest and notary both fully participated.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF EVENTS.

We will now pass over an interval of twenty years, and transport ourselves into the month of March, 1814, that epoch of sorrowful memory, when the whole of Europe had hurled itself against France, and foreign armies covered the half of her territory. Before resuming the thread of our narrative, we will give a summary of all that has transpired during this interval to the principal characters introduced in this narrative.

Immediately after peace was restored to the Church of France by the Concordat, the priest of Auvrigny had been restored to his church and vicarage, to the intense satisfaction and joy of his parishioners. Happy to find himself at liberty in the midst of his flock, the venerable pastor resumed the exercise of his spiritual duties with that perfect calmness and serenity of soul so characteristic of him, without manifesting an exaggeration of joy, but with the same simplicity, the same quiet fervor, as though a casual illness or a short journey had only occurred to interrupt his apostolic labors.

The Duke d'Auvrigny was informed by a letter from the priest (as soon as postal communications were re-es-

tablished) of the death of his only child. The blow fell on him with terrible force, filling him with an indescribable agony, and sufficient to overwhelm with despair a soul unsustained by the consolations of religion.

But happily the principles of the faith in which he had been reared, for a long time neglected during the days of prosperity, but which had already sustained him under the heavy burden of adversity and death, came again to his aid, and prevented him from sinking beneath the still more fearful blow that had now fallen upon him. After long days and nights spent in tears and groans of anguish, he at length found strength to offer up to God his precious sacrifice, and by slow degrees a calm spirit of resignation appeared to take the place of the intense and bitter agony of his lacerated soul.

As soon as her exiled children were permitted to return to France, he hastened back to his country, and went to reside at Auvrigny, there to end his days, and be buried by the side of his son, in the tomb of his ancestors ; "that the same earth," he said, "might contain the first and the last of the race."

When he arrived at Auvrigny, sorrow and suffering had so entirely changed him, that the priest and his friends were scarcely able to recognize him. He informed them of his intention to remain with them, adding that he desired to live a life of perfect retirement, receiving no visitors save his three faithful friends. "It is not," he said, "because I have become a misanthrope ; but I wish henceforth to consecrate entirely and exclusively to the care of my eternal salvation the short time that remains for me to live. I have labored, during the greater part of my life, to fulfill the duties devolving on me, toward my king, my country, and the honor of my family.

I can not do better now than to devote the remainder of my days in accomplishing the duties I owe to my God."

His fortune, although it could not be compared to the opulence he had formerly enjoyed, was more than sufficient to maintain the modest style of living he desired henceforth to follow. Beside the revenue of the three farms purchased by Father Planart, the government restored him such of his domains as had not been sold. It is true, however, these consisted only of some woodlands of little value, that Citizen Grospin had not deigned to purchase.

In order to be nearer the church and his friend the priest, he bought a piece of land adjoining the vicarage; on a portion of this, he erected a small cottage, connected with the vicarage in such a manner as to form a single body of buildings; with the surplus ground he enlarged the priest's garden. He reserved the ownership of the cottage only during his lifetime, intending, at his death, that it should become part of the vicarage. He afterward repurchased the old Almonry, and restored it to its original destination, adding a school for boys, taught by the Christian Brothers, and one for girls, in charge of the Sisters of Charity.

His entire income, with the exception of what was strictly necessary for his maintenance and personal expenses, was employed in works of charity.

He rarely ever went out, except to church, and sometimes to promenade in his garden. Occasionally, he would be found wandering among the ruins of the old castle; but as it was not convenient for a man of his age to climb the ladder from the dove-cot, and the little door still remained walled up, he had constructed, with the priest's permission, a stairway from the door found in the

cabinet of the old kitchen, to which we have several times referred. The kitchen itself had been transformed into a kind of parlor, or sitting-room, where from time to time were assembled our old acquaintances, Father Planart. Monsieur Courlet, with the priest and Duke d'Auvrigny.

The old nobleman passed in this peaceable and quiet seclusion a dozen years ; as he said, the most beautiful and tranquil period of his life. He died during the year 1811, leaving by his will about one third of his fortune to the family of Father Planart (the head of that family having died some months before his old master), a third to Monsieur Courlet, and the remaining third to the priest, to be employed by him in works of charity.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### REVOLUTIONARY NOBILITY.

WHILE the last remaining representative of the ancient family of Auvrigny was arranging to withdraw into the utmost possible privacy, and making every effort to remain obscure and unknown, the actual proprietor of the forges, and the vast possessions which had belonged to that family, was residing in Paris, loaded with honors, and surrounded by all the pomp and splendor of luxury and wealth. A member of the Council of Five Hundred, he had been, at the 18th Brumaire, one of those who had contributed most to the success of that day. As a reward for his devotion, the First Consul had made him senator, and on the occasion of his marriage with Marie Louise, had conferred on him the title of Count of the Empire. But the name of Grospin alone seemed too plebeian to be attached to his new title ; consequently he called himself "Count Grospin d'Auvrigny." His son, however, a young man who displayed the most unbounded extravagance, and affected the manners of a great lord, went more boldly to the point. His cards were inscribed with simply the words, "*Alfred Grospin, Baron d'Auvrigny,*" the whole surmounted by a viscount's coronal. He confidently hoped, on the death of his father, to be called simply "Count d'Auvrigny."

And who was there to protest? In the world where he was thrown, no one would think of disputing a title which nobody could claim ; for the only man who had a right to rebuke such pretensions was hovering on the verge of the tomb, thinking only of another world, and seemingly but little concerned about any thing transpiring in this.

Thus it happened one day, as the old duke was seated with his friends in the vicarage parlor, that the conversation turned on the absurd pretensions of the Grospins, father and son ; the notary thereupon expressed himself with an indignation and vehemence entirely unusual to him.

"Calm yourself, my dear Courlet," said the old nobleman, smiling. "Is it not better to yield to every thing in this age of subversion and usurpation? Would you wish to see me contest the usurpation of a name honored and honorable for so many centuries? God preserve us! I have been for too many years disgusted with all such empty baubles and dreams of vanity. If I still occupied myself with what passes in the world, it would only be to laugh at the comedy now being played after the bloody tragedy of fifteen years ago ; to see the same actors who at that time proscribed, ruined, and massacred the nobility, to-day dressed out in their titles, and busy altering their red bonnets into coronals of duke or count. What does it matter, I ask you, if Citizen Gros-pin should make them call him "Baron" or "Count d'Auvrigny"? Can it in any way sully the glory of the ancient family which has borne that name? I think not, and I have not therefore let it disturb me. But, besides this, I am convinced that he has no such intention, because he has not dared to adopt our coat-of-arms, nor the device, '*Deo et Regi fidelis perpetuo*,' it is true that this motto

would appear slightly inconsistent on the escutcheon of an old revolutionist and republican."

But the duke was mistaken; after the Restoration, Senator Count Grospin, made peer of France, boldly appropriated the coat-of-arms and device of the ancient house of Auvrigny. But let us now leave the Grospin family, merely saying, by way of parenthesis, that the son dissipated in expensive follies and debaucheries the entire fortune amassed by his father, and return to an individual of whom we have not spoken for a long time, and who has yet an important part to perform in and afterward to bring up the conclusion of our narrative.

## CHAPTER XV.

### EX-CITIZEN BRUTUS.

TOUSTAIN, on leaving Auvergne, returned directly to Paris, where he had been summoned. The change had been much more complete there than he anticipated. The Jacobin Club was closed, and all his former friends had either fled or been imprisoned. He betook himself at once to the house of his former patron, Citizen Grosclin; but the door was cruelly shut in his face. When he presented himself to the new authorities to render an account of his stewardship as "Commissioner and Delegate of the Committee of Public Safety," the only reply they made was to issue a warrant for his arrest, and have him immediately thrown into prison.

There he found a number of his old friends victims like himself to the Thermidorian reaction. After six months' imprisonment, he was tried and acquitted; as they discovered he had committed none of those atrocities and acts of barbarism of which the greater number of those were guilty who exercised power during the Reign of Terror. They could only accuse him of some few harsh measures and arbitrary arrests; but these were insignificant peccadilloes, very pardonable in the eyes of his judges, who had probably themselves been guilty of far greater outrages and crimes.

But that which above all contributed toward insuring his acquittal was the fact that he had faithfully returned to the National Treasury all money impressed during his term of office, as well as all patriotic gifts and valuables found in the churches and convents.

Honesty being a very rare commodity among their government agents certainly deserved to be rewarded.

Owing to this consideration, Toussaint was acquitted, but his restoration to liberty was accompanied by an order requiring him to leave Paris in twenty-four hours, and not to stop within forty leagues of the city.

This last blow served to dispel the illusions of Toussaint, which six months of captivity had already very much shaken. He returned to his family. At first, he seriously hesitated about taking this course, thinking the recollection of his recent visit to Auvrigny was still too fresh in the minds of the people ; but, on reflection, he said to himself, " Bah ! what have I to fear ? After all, I have frightened much more than hurt them. There are still some good patriots there who will give me a welcome reception ; as to the Royalists, they will always hate me, but what harm will that do to me ?" So he returned to Auvrigny, where his presence excited considerable comment and surprise. " Brutus has returned !" cried the timid women of the village, with an involuntary shudder, while the children, peering from behind the half-open doors, screamed, " There is Brutus ! there is Brutus !" invariably, as they saw him passing.

Gradually all became quiet and accustomed to his presence, and Toussaint soon attracted no more attention than before he had made himself so obnoxious. They seemed to have forgotten the past, and the name of " Brutus" alone remained to recall the recollection. But this

name, although intended as an insult by the greater number of those who applied it, was by no means annoying or disagreeable to him. He regarded it, on the contrary, as a glorious title, recalling the most distinguished period of his life.

Again returned to his old haunts, Toustain resumed immediately his former mode of living. He was at first occupied in putting his affairs in order, as he had not been enriched by the clubs, nor during the exercise of his public functions. If the death of his father-in-law had not occurred, and the portion he received of his wife's inheritance come to afford him new resources, he would have found himself in a state of extreme embarrassment.

During the entire duration of the Directory of the Consulate and Empire, Toustain abstained from every act and every political demonstration, contenting himself with manifesting his opposition by defrauding the rights of the government in his ale-house, and devoting himself more assiduously than ever to his old habit of poaching. He had now, it is true, to deal with a new lord and proprietor, very much more exacting and severe in executing the game laws than the old lords of Auvrigny had ever been. In fact, Count Grosphin, or rather his son, Baron Alfred, came constantly to hunt in his forests, and directed his gamekeepers to show no mercy to poachers.

But such threats only served to encourage Toustain, who gave himself up with more audacity than ever to his practice of poaching, careful to avoid, however, coming openly in contact with the agents of the law. "Oh!" he would say, "as to them, I have no grudge against the gamekeepers—they have their own business to attend to, and so long as they only make a joke of it, all will be right. If they should try to use force, however, that would

be another thing, and not at all to my liking. As to their master, the senator or his son, I advise them not to come in my way ; as my gun sometimes goes off of itself."

He had really taken a vow of implacable hatred toward the Grospins, father and son, and never mentioned their names unaccompanied by curses and threats. There was another person also whom Toustain hated almost as much as the master of the forges, himself, but from very different motives ; this was the priest of Auvrigny. He had never forgiven the turn he had taken on him in 1794, and his rancor was as bitter in 1814 as it was twenty years before. To that particular grudge was added the hatred he entertained toward all priests, and which time only served to increase. One of his especial accusations against the Emperor Napoleon was his having reopened the churches and established the Catholic religion. It was to that cause alone he attributed the last recent disasters, from Moscow to Leipsic, and the foreign invasion.

By a singular contradiction, while so bitterly detesting religion and the priests that he had not entered a church since his early childhood (except to profane them during the Reign of Terror), yet he made no objection to his wife going to mass on Sundays, or to her taking his children, and had never found fault with her, or tried to prevent her from having them make their first communion.

Toustain remained thus for twenty years a stranger, in a manner, to all that transpired in France during that long period. But at the sight of foreign uniforms on her soil, the old man of '92 and '93 was aroused, and all his former energy and bitterness revived. He used every exertion to influence the population of Auvrigny to share in the sentiments animating his own reckless soul, but his eloquence, recalling the epoch of the Prussian invasion dur-

ing the existence of the republic, was all wasted and in vain. It was not, however, because the sentiment of patriotism had been extinguished in the hearts of his countrymen, or that their national pride was not wounded by the presence of the invader; but the time for civic transports and feverish excitements had passed away, and it could not be revived by the circumstances then surrounding them.

The only reply Toustain received to his most vehement exhortations upon the necessity and obligation of taking up arms, in a body, to repel the invader, was to point him to the proclamation issued by the commanding general of the invading army condemning to be shot any individual not belonging to the French army who should be found with arms in his hands.

After reading this proclamation, Toustain contented himself by saying, "That of Brunswick was more threatening, and yet it did not frighten us. But go, go ! I see you are more than a degenerate people; you are cowards !" And he left them without further remonstrance, in silence and disgust.

From that time, he rarely ever made his appearance in the parish. His days and some of his nights were spent in the woods, but when he returned home, he brought no more game, although he had neither gamekeepers nor gendarmes to prevent him from hunting. When his wife inquired why he remained so long absent, and why, at that season, he found neither hare nor partridge, during his protracted expeditions, he replied brusquely that he was not obliged to render an account of himself to her. He repulsed the caresses of his children, retired at night without addressing a word to any one, and started out again before day the next morning.

His mysterious conduct and gloomy, preoccupied manner rendered his family quite anxious, and gave rise to a thousand conjectures in the minds of his neighbors and the people generally. But the truth was very soon discovered. Toustain had been employed in recruiting in the villages, in the Vosges, and among the peasantry, driven from their homes by the invaders, and had succeeded in raising quite a large and well-armed company, of which he had been made captain. This independent corps, organized after the manner of those gotten up at that period in different parts of the country, acted on their own account, and were subject to no superior authority. Their object was to attack isolated squads of soldiers; capture convoys feebly escorted—in fine, to keep up a guerilla warfare against the enemy, the most dangerous of all obstacles to an invading army.

The country of Auvrigny served as headquarters for this troop of marauders, who called themselves "Brutus Company," in honor of their captain, who had haughtily resumed his revolutionary title.

The inhabitants of the village of Auvrigny trembled lest the exploits of this band should bring down the wrath of the enemy upon their place, which not being on the route of the armies, had until this time suffered very little from the invasion; but the apprehensions of the Auvrigny people was a matter of very small concern to Captain Brutus.

It was not long before the foreign general in command of the neighboring departments was informed of the hostile acts committed by Toustain and his band, and sent detachments with orders to disperse them, and to capture their chief at all hazards, dead or alive. It was not an easy undertaking for strange soldiers to follow

through the woods and mountain defiles men thoroughly acquainted with every by-path, every hiding-place, and all the accidents and chances belonging to the soil of that mountainous country. On more than one occasion, the enemy's detachments, after having found the independent "Company of Brutus," and repelled some of their murderous assaults, confident that they were about to ensnare them, were not a little nonplussed, after they had cautiously surrounded them on all sides, to find not one of them in the place where but a few moments before they had discovered the entire band encamped.

Finding their first efforts prove futile, the Austrian general resolved, in order to close with his indomitable enemy, to order military occupation of all the villages of Auvrigny, and to have the surrounding country scoured by moving columns in every direction.

These measures were kept secret until the moment of their execution. At break of day, the several detachments started out, each one to its respective destination. The general himself accompanied the command sent to occupy the village of Auvrigny, where he proposed establishing his headquarters until the close of the expedition.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"—"DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU."**

THE command accompanying the general was composed of a regiment of Hungarian Hussars and a battalion of Tyrolean Chasseurs, infantry drilled and experienced in the tactics of mountain and forest warfare. They marched, preceded by an advance guard of hussars, under command of an officer.

After several hours, the general dispatched an order to the officer in command of the advance guard to proceed rapidly toward the village of Auvrigny, and secure quarters for the rest of the column. He immediately started at a quick pace, and had already arrived in sight of the village, when a rapid *fusillade* proceeding from an adjoining thicket, and the direction of the ruins of the castle, killed and wounded five of his hussars. He put spurs to his horse, and with the six that remained, galloped at full speed toward the village. The officer, better mounted than his men, had already passed the first house, when a gunshot, fired from a field near by, wounded him in the right knee, and brought down his horse, who rolled in the dust with his rider. At the same instant, the hussars fired three or four rounds from their carbines at the man who had wounded their officer, and who, far from concealing himself, stood deliberately reloading his gun. That man,

it may be readily divined, was none other than Toustain, who, seeing the small number of hussars, had not hesitated to make the attack, under the impression that this was an isolated detachment.

The soldiers, seeing their officer fall, turned and galloped back toward the advancing column. Toustain pursued them for some time, when, being joined by four or five of his band, he addressed them as follows: "Charge on those brave fellows there, my boys, and I will return and attend to their officer; for I am sure I have only wounded him, and I want to find out from the jackanapes what they have been sent out to do here or elsewhere."

But on reaching the spot where the officer and his horse had fallen, he found only the horse; the man had disappeared. It had happened in this way.

The good people of the village, hearing the report of firearms, hastened at once to the scene of conflict. Seeing a man seriously wounded, their first impulse was to relieve him; but they were not able to give him the attention in their humble tenements that his condition required; moreover, they feared Toustain and his band. They at once determined to remove him to the vicarage, where he would be safer and more comfortably attended and nursed.

Immediately improvising a litter, in a few moments they were at the vicarage. The good priest thanked them kindly for having thought of intrusting to him the performance of this work of mercy, and immediately advised them to withdraw, in order not to expose themselves to Toustain's resentment. Then addressing himself to the officer, the priest inquired with kindly interest where and how he had been wounded.

The lieutenant, who spoke very good French, entirely

reassured at sight of the venerable ecclesiastic with his snow-white locks and benevolent countenance, related all that had happened, adding that his regiment would hasten to the village, and especially if the general had been informed of the attack.

"But until the arrival of your men," replied the priest, "you would have been exposed to great danger."

The worthy ecclesiastic hastened at once to have a bed prepared in a remote apartment, where his guest would be able to remain securely until all exterior danger had passed. The individual intrusted with the duty of chambermaid was none other than the housekeeper, Claudine, our old acquaintance, whom age and, above all, the terrible lesson she formerly received, had completely cured of her propensity to gossip.

As soon as the arrangements were completed, the officer, aided by the priest's arm and a pair of crutches, was assisted to his room. His host, having gotten him into bed, was preparing to dress his wound, when a loud knocking was heard at the front door, with fierce threats of forcing it unless it was instantly opened.

The priest hastened to the door and opened it without hesitation. It was Toustain, who, not finding the Austrian officer in the place where he had fallen, and hearing he had been carried to the vicarage, came to claim him as his prisoner.

He entered as the door opened, foaming with rage, and uttering the most savage threats.

"Where is that *kaiserlich* officer?" he cried with a terrible oath, "where is he? Tell me, I want to speak to him."

"He is in bed and suffering very much," responded the priest, in his most calm and quiet manner, "and he is not in a condition to see you."

"Oh ! he need not try that game ; I will see him on the spot ; and here is," he added, raising his gun, "here is what will very soon compel him to prattle, if he tries to be obstinate with his tongue."

"But I tell you again he is not able to see nor talk to you."

"Ah ! this is the way you are going to manage it, is it ? Well, we'll see about it now. You think you are at liberty to harbor an enemy after this fashion, do you, and that we'll all submit to it ?"

"It is not an enemy to whom I have given shelter, but a wounded man. When a man is in a helpless condition and incapable of doing us an injury, he can no longer be considered an enemy, and humanity as well as religion commands us to assist him."

"Get along with your fine phrases, I want none of your advice. You know well enough that you and your other monks love foreigners better than you do French people ; and if Bonaparte had not commenced the foolery of recalling you priests, we would not be where we are now."

"I can not apply your reproach to myself, because I have never yet left France, nor even my parish, as you have very good cause to know ; therefore nobody has ever recalled me."

This reply served still more to exasperate Toussaint, by reminding him of the odious and ridiculous part he had played, in his efforts to discover and arrest the curé. He glared at the priest with an expression of intense hatred, and said through his clenched teeth :

"Oh ! no, you haven't left France, I know that ; but you have conspired none the less with Pitt and Cobourg. I know that very well too ; and if I had laid my hands on

you, you should have paid dearly for it, be sure of it. But we will let that pass now. I ask you again to deliver up to me on the spot my prisoner, or I will not answer for the consequences, not even for your life." Saying this, he raised his gun and leveled it at the priest, accompanying the action with the most horrid imprecations.

Perfectly calm and composed, the priest regarded the furious man with an expression of intense pity, and said, "Toustain, you may take my life if you have the courage to slay an old and defenseless man; but you can never force me to violate the laws of hospitality, humanity, and religion."

His perfect composure, his quiet dignity and resolute firmness, together with an expression of indescribable gentleness and compassion lighting up the countenance of the venerable old man, gave him an appearance almost superhuman.

Toustain, in spite of his furious transports, was struck by his manner and angelic expression, and experienced a momentary feeling of remorse.

He had not replied when the front door was thrown violently open, and a woman, with terrified countenance and disordered dress, rushed into the room. Perceiving Toustain, she cried out in a distressed tone:

"Save yourself, Remi! or rather hide yourself at once, for all is lost! The Austrians are already here, and more than fifteen hundred foot and cavalry. Your men are all dispersed, and big James has come in alone to tell me all that has happened. He has gone to join the others in the woods. Hide yourself; the only sure way is to hide, Remi, for the soldiers are spread through every street in the village, and you can not get out from this house without falling into their hands. Ah! Monsieur le Curé," she

continued, in an imploring voice, "if you would only make him hide in some of the subterranean vaults of the old castle which they say you know so well!"

"Hold your tongue, woman," yelled Toustain, who had remained, while she was speaking, plunged in a state of gloomy reflection. "The curé neither can nor will protect me, and as for me, I neither can nor will accept any thing from him. I will get out of this and try to join my men. If I can't do that, be sure the Austrians shall never take me alive. I will have the pleasure at least of making some of the knaves bite the dust, for I shall sell my life dearly."

He had already made a step toward the door, when the bugle-call of the cavalry was heard, and from the windows the hussars could be seen arranged in order of battle round the premises, while every avenue of escape from the house was closely guarded.

"See, Remi! see!" cried the wife of Toustain, transported with terror; "thou canst no longer think of escaping. We are lost! My God! what will become of us? And our poor children!" Saying this, she threw herself in a chair, and, with sobs and groans, covered her face with her hands.

The sight of his wife's despair, and thoughts of his infant children, caused a sudden reaction in this fierce and indomitable nature. He gave a heavy sigh, while tears of rage and mortification rose to his eyes.

The curé, who had calmly witnessed this exciting scene, felt that the moment had arrived for him to make the proposal his kind heart had suggested. Approaching Toustain and taking his hand, he said, in a gentle voice:

"Toustain, you declared just now that I neither could nor would assist you; well, you are mistaken; I can save

you, and I will. Follow me, and I will answer for your life with my own."

Toustain, regarding the priest with a stupefied air, snatched away his hand. "No, no!" he stammered, "it is not possible! After all that's just now passed between us! No! you couldn't do it—you wouldn't do it!"

"Again I repeat it," replied the priest urgently. "Think of your wife and your children. We have no time to argue—in five minutes more it will be too late. There remains but one way of escape—come, then, profit by it, Toustain."

"Oh! my husband," cried the poor wife, "do what Monsieur le Curé tells thee! Something makes me feel that if you do, you will be saved, and all will be well!"

"And thou! what will become of thee?"

"Don't feel uneasy about me, Remi. A woman will excite no suspicion. I can easily get out; they do not know who I am, and I will get back to my children. Go, Remi, go!"

Captain Brutus bent his head like a man resigned, and mechanically followed the priest, who, putting him through the door constructed by the duke, in order to reach the galleries from the parlor, said to him:

"Go up now until you come to a kind of corridor on the first floor. Remain there temporarily; I will find for you later, if necessary, a more convenient lodging-place, when the present danger is over."

Toustain's wife, seeing her husband safe, at least for the time, hurried to her home, which she regained with little difficulty.

Five minutes had not elapsed after the scene just related when the Austrian general, accompanied by his chief of staff, presented himself at the priest's door. He was

followed by the mayor's deputy (it was no longer Brulart, but a good, respectable farmer of the village) and three of the principal inhabitants of the parish, whose services had been impressed for the occasion. A file of Tyrolean Chasseurs served as an escort; the other soldiers of the same corps were stationed as sentinels at all the doors and beneath the windows of the house, while the mounted hussars were placed at the different exterior entrances.

On seeing so formidable a company approaching, the priest hastened to open the door, and conducted the newcomers into the parlor with simple and dignified politeness. The general, after having responded very coldly to the priest's salutations, said without farther ceremony:

" You doubtless understand, Monsieur l'Abbé, the meaning of this visit. I come to demand the surrender of two men who have chanced to be brought here; one is an officer of my regiment, wounded by some brigands; the other is the chief of those same brigands, who came here in pursuit of his victim. Can you give me any information of either of these men?"

" Gentlemen," replied the priest, " you will please follow me. I will immediately conduct you to one of the persons you seek." Saying this, he led them into the apartment of the wounded Austrian soldier. The latter, seeing his general and comrades, raised up in his bed, and greeted them with exclamations of delight; he then began to relate in glowing terms the manner in which the priest had received him, and the efforts he had made, at the peril of his own life, to prevent the bandit captain from searching for him; having heard from his chamber a part of the conversation which had taken place a few moments before between the curé and Toustain.

After hearing the officer's story, the general inquired concerning his wounds, and then leaving him in charge of his surgeon-major, he returned to the parlor with the other soldiers and men who had accompanied him.

Then addressing the priest in a very different tone from that he had adopted on his arrival, he said :

" I ask your pardon, sir, for the unbecoming manner in which I addressed you on first entering your house ; but you will readily understand to what an extent my indignation had been excited and my soul grieved at seeing so many of my brave soldiers murdered by a handful of robbers ; and then on hearing that the chief of their gang had taken refuge here, and had perhaps come with the intention of murdering the brave officer whom he had wounded. I beg you again, sir, to pardon me for the unworthy suspicion with which I shall always reproach myself for having permitted to enter my breast. You have protected and saved the life of this officer by placing yourself between him and the murderous assaults of this savage outlaw ; receive, therefore, my sincere acknowledgments for the magnanimous act, and be assured I am ready to do all that is possible to testify my gratitude."

" If you consider yourself under any obligations to me, sir, I have but one favor to ask of you."

" Speak, Monsieur le Curé, your request shall certainly be accorded, if not incompatible with my duty."

" I can not think your duty will be opposed to an act of humanity. I ask the life of the man of whom you are now in pursuit, in return for the protection I have extended to your officer."

Hearing this request, the Austrian officers fired with indignation, and the general himself seemed displeased ; however, he replied calmly, " Your demand, Monsieur

l'Abbé, is consistent with the spirit of the religion whose minister you are ; but the duties of a soldier are not always compatible with those of a Christian. If Toussaint, called 'Brutus'" (and he dwelt ironically on the name), "if that man and his band had been soldiers, we should treat them as such—that is, once disarmed, we should make them prisoners, and their lives would then be held sacred. But they are veritable robbers, who murder instead of making war, and consequently we shall treat them as murderers. Moreover, the orders of our commanders are positive. Their proclamations have been circulated in every direction, and these men whom you undertake to defend have had all necessary warning."

"But, sir," said the priest with firm persistence, "they are but illiterate, uneducated peasants, unable to comprehend how they can be held under the same obedience to strangers that they yield to their own sovereign. Then, a decree of the Emperor Napoleon in January last has called them to arms and declared them soldiers ; and they believe themselves soldiers under the same right and title as those who serve in the regular army ; and you, sir, who argue so well on the subject of obedience to authority, can not make it a crime for these men to have obeyed their sovereign."

The general would probably have found himself slightly at a loss for an answer to this argument had an incident not occurred at the moment which diverted the conversation into another channel. One of the staff-officers, observing a double-barreled gun leaning against the wall, took it up immediately, and handed it to the general. After examining it, he humorously demanded of the priest if by any chance this plaything belonged to him.

"I have never in my life," responded the priest, "possessed any other weapon than my breviary."

"I believe it, but these gentlemen," he said, addressing the sheriff and the three other citizens of Auvrigny, "will perhaps recognize to whom this gun belongs."

After examining it, they all declared it to be the gun of Remi Toustant.

"We had no need of proof," replied the general, "to convince us that this man was but just now here, and that in all probability he is here yet. We shall be compelled to make a strict search of the premises, unless Monsieur l'Abbé will spare us the necessity of a measure as disagreeable for us as for him."

"General," replied the priest with dignity, "you are master of my house as well as of my person; do with either whatever you wish, but do not seek to obtain information from me that my conscience will not permit me to give."

"I intended no offense, Monsieur le Curé; I understand your scruples; but I see on what I must depend. That man has not been able to make his escape from the vicarage before our arrival; because the environs were surrounded, and every avenue guarded. He must then be concealed in some one of the vaults which they tell me exist under the old castle and communicate with the vicarage. What is your opinion, Mr. Deputy?"

"I believe as you do, and especially since I know he is better acquainted with the vaults than any body else. He has visited them often enough before this, in 1794, when he was searching for Monsieur le Curé, who was obliged to hide himself, in time of the 'Terror,' and whom Toustant tried to arrest and take to the guillotine.

It is very well for him that our good curé harbors no

revenge in his breast, and that he can so easily forget what is past."

" You would have done much better, Monsieur Deputy," said the priest in a reproachful tone, " if you had made no reference to things that are past ; they do not at all concern these gentlemen, who are occupied only with the present."

" Yes," replied the general, " and we will proceed at once to give it our especial attention. Captain Diebitch," he continued, addressing one of the officers of his staff, " take eight or ten men with you, furnish yourselves with torches, and make a careful search through the vaults underneath the castle. The deputy and these gentlemen will be pleased to accompany you and serve you as guides."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### PEACEABLE CONCLUSION.

THE other officers asked permission of the general to accompany their comrade in his subterranean expedition, which permission was readily accorded them. They directed their steps toward the sacristy, which route only had been discovered by the inhabitants of the country since the famous expeditions of the "Delegate of the Committee of Public Safety;" the existence of the upper galleries still remaining a profound secret.

The general and the priest were left alone in the parlor. After they had all retired, the general spoke in a deeply serious manner, and said, "I have not words to express the admiration I feel for the spirit you have manifested toward this man who has heretofore so persistently sought to take your life, and but a few moments since again threatened to kill you; yours is truly the sublimest act of Christian charity."

"My dear sir," replied the priest, "I see nothing in what I have done to merit the eulogies you bestow on me. I endeavor, as far as my feeble nature will permit, to obey the laws of my divine Master, and to conform to the requirements he has laid down in that book—that is

all." In saying this, he pointed to a volume lying on the mantelpiece against which the general was leaning.

The latter turned around, took up the book, and opened it. "I suspect," he said, "that it is the Bible. Oh! how happy men would be if, like yourself, my dear sir, they would regulate their lives and conduct by its teachings!"

Then, after turning over several pages, he came to this passage, and read aloud, "It has been said, You shall love your friends and hate your enemies; but I say unto you, *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.*"

"What admirable morality, and how little men practice it! You are the first I have met, Monsieur le Curé, following it with candor and sincerity—I might almost say with childlike simplicity. And now, sir, your example excites me to emulation, and as far as my position will possibly admit, I will assist you in your work of doing good for evil. If we succeed in arresting Toustain, not only do I promise you no harm shall come to him, but I will furthermore inform our commanding general of the circumstances, and the interest you take in him, and I hope to induce him to regard and treat him as simply a prisoner of war. If between now and to-morrow morning, we do not succeed in finding him, I will not prosecute the search farther. But this will all be on one condition: you will promise me, in his name, that he will consider himself a prisoner of war on parole, and not recommence his expeditions against us. Besides, his wife and children shall be kept as hostages to answer for his future good conduct."

"You have *there* a pledge far more powerful than my word, sir; for I can say, to Toustain's credit, I know not

in all my parish, a man more attached to his wife and children."

"Ah well ! I will be satisfied with that security then ; but this agreement must remain entirely between ourselves ; I do not desire before my officers, nor the inhabitants of the borough, to seem to relax any thing of my former rigor."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of an aid-de-camp of the field-marshall, who brought important dispatches to the general.

The latter having glanced rapidly over them, joyfully exclaimed, "On my faith, Monsieur le Curé, here is news that singularly simplifies this question. The war is over ; Paris has surrendered ; the Emperor Napoleon has abdicated ; the Bourbons have been recalled to France ; peace is declared, and our brigade will return immediately to Austria. I must go and give orders for the departure of my command."

The glorious news spread rapidly among the soldiers, who were transported with joy. Those who had been sent to the vaults were commanded to give up the search, and hastened to join their comrades.

The general returned to the vicarage, with a carriage loaned him by the deputy, to convey the wounded lieutenant, who was to follow the battalion. He bade the curé a touching adieu, and said in a low voice as he departed :

"Advise Toustain, if you should have occasion to see him, not to show himself until after the departure of my soldiers."

The good priest stood in no need of this recommendation. He waited until the last Austrian had left the parish before going to open the door of the closet where

Toustain had been concealed for more than four hours. On coming from his retreat, he was scarcely recognizable. Instead of his usual arrogant and threatening manner, his form was bent, his head bowed with shame and repentance, his gaze fixed on the ground, and he dared not raise his eyes, red and swollen with weeping, to the priest's face.

"Come, my friend," cried the good priest, "put off that gloomy countenance, and rejoice, rejoice, man, that you are saved!"

"Monsieur le Curé," replied Toustain in a low, husky voice, trembling and broken with sighs, "I have heard all you have done and said for me, from my hiding-place. I have no heart to rejoice when I think of the wrongs and the harm I have tried to do you, and all the good you have done for me in return. Oh! if I could only hear you say you could pardon me!"

"And this very moment you hear it. Yes, my dear Remi, I forgive you with all my heart, and may our gracious Lord one day forgive you, even as I do!"

And saying this, this saintly man of God took the wretched outcast in his arms, and the two mingled their tears—the one of tender compassion, the other of heart-broken repentance. All that remained of the old hatred and malice in the breast of Toustain was dissolved by contact with that ardent charity; he went forth entirely transformed, a new man, exclaiming with humble enthusiasm, "Monsieur le Curé, henceforth I am yours—yours in life and in death, body and soul; I devote myself entirely to your service. You can do with me whatever you see fit."

"My friend," replied the priest, "I desire only to make you a good Christian; that is the most ardent wish of my heart."

"Monsieur le Curé, then let me ask you one more favor: will you lend me that book the *kaiserlich* general was reading from just now?"

"Not only *lend* it to you, Remi, but *give* it to you most joyfully, because your asking for this book is a proof that my desire will soon be accomplished."

The prayers of this good and holy man were answered, his ardent desire granted, his godlike spirit of charity fully rewarded. Toustain, after having been, for so many years, the scandal of the parish and the entire country, led henceforth until his death a most pious and edifying life.

THE END.

# THE KING OF THE BEAN.

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## I.

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS.

"TELL me true, Jordaens, dost thou wish to leave me for Rubens's fine band of pupils? I have heard it said, and after all, I do not marvel at it much, seeing that success has ever drawn men to it, and that the world is apt to run to the quarter where most noise is made. When a master is old, he is easily forgotten. And by the by, who is Rubens? Only my own old pupil. He learnt every thing through me, and now that he has caught the public fancy, and that it has become the fashion with our most substantial citizens of Antwerp to rave about his strange coloring and his dashing manner, there is no painter in leading-strings but must, forsooth, follow in the wake of the new master. But I would not have believed it of thee, Jacques; how canst thou be so forgetful, so ungrateful, boy?"

"'Tis a hard saying, that, master," answered Jordaens, as he felt the hand that held his brush tremble.

"Nay, 'tis a just one," said Van Ort, whose choler had reached its acme, and who was pacing quickly up and down the studio. "I have always opposed a man changing schools or principles, mind you; but what is that to the changeable humor of a favorite pupil, whom I have

caressed and treated as my own son? But, after all," he said, suddenly stopping short, and lowering his voice, "I have no legal authority over thee; we were bound only by a voluntary compact, which thou art surely at liberty to break. Go elsewhere, by all means, if thou thinkest it to thine advantage."

"Allow me to say a word, master," said the youth, whose courage seemed to flow back since Van Ort had moderated his tone, "what you call my advantage touches me very little. I am young, I have plenty of time before me, and I have resolution; therefore I am pretty nearly sure of attaining my end some day. But what *does* matter to me is my art. No one should hesitate to seize every means that can further or develop his talents, and if I have thought of studying under the guidance of Rubens, it is because I have found in him a certain congeniality with my own nature, and because, if I am able to learn his secret, I too could enlarge and multiply the talents which God has given me."

"Just hear the lad! what ambition!" exclaimed Van Ort. "Why, but a moment ago, it was as a humble pupil that he proposed to go to Rubens; but now, he dreams of rivaling the master!"

"Not so soon," said Jordaens, "but later, why not?"

"Pride!"

"Nay, master, 'tis but emulation. But your very words, by proving to me Rubens's exalted talent, only confirm me in my own resolution."

"Very well, boy," said Van Ort bitterly, "go where thou listest, thou art free. But evening draws on, and I must leave thee for my tavern, the White Swan. Nothing like a good tankard of foaming beer to drown the disappointments of life. Think well before thy departure; I

do not wish to compel thee, but be guided by reason and perhaps a little by friendship."

"My friendship, or rather my gratitude for you, will never fade," warmly said Jordaens, as he dutifully held out to his master his hat, gloves, and cloak. The youth remained alone, and was anxiously debating with himself, when a side-door opened and two women came in. One was old and wrinkled, and was supported by the other, a young girl, whose beauty was set off by her modest demeanor. Jordaens, though rooted to his seat by shyness, could not help uttering a cry of joy. Dame Van Ort and her daughter Catharine had never, till now, done him the honor to enter the studio solely on his account; but this time he could not be mistaken; he was alone, and the visit was evidently intended for him. The old lady did not keep him long in suspense.

"Jacques," she said, "my husband's voice, raised in anger, as we thought, drew us to this room. I heard the altercation, and am sorry to know its cause; you seemed so friendly to us all."

"Madame," said Jordaens, "since you heard my master's reproaches, you must also have heard my answer, and you must have gathered from it my feelings toward Master Van Ort. I trust he will do me justice some day; but you who are less interested may better appreciate my present behavior. I shall always look upon myself as the pupil of the skillful painter who first taught me to handle a brush; and if I go to Rubens, it is only because I feel it to be my duty, as it is that of every one, to seek after perfection."

"Of course. But still——"

"Say, am I right or wrong?"

"I can not say that you are wrong, and yet——"

" Dear mother," said Catharine with animation, " will you allow me to express an opinion ?"

" Why not ?" said Dame Van Ort, somewhat taken by surprise.

" It seems to me," said the girl, " that Monsieur Jordaens should, before all things, think of his future, and that we have no right to claim from him the sacrifice of his intellectual freedom of action. If God has sent him this inspiration, no other dare call him to account for following it."

" It may be," said her mother, " but Van Ort will never understand such reasoning. No one knows better than yourself, child, how obstinate your father is in his resolutions. It is well-nigh thirty years since his own brother Samuel left him, having run through his share of his father's estate, and my husband has never since allowed his name to be mentioned in his presence ; no prayers or reasonings of mine ever moved him an inch from this resolve."

" Well," said Catharine, " I think I foresee an expedient which will reconcile matters."

" Oh ! speak quickly, I beseech you," cried Jordaens, his heart already rejoicing.

" You might halve your time between Rubens and your earliest master, and I warrant you such an arrangement will not be displeasing to my father."

" You are an angel !" said the youth, who immediately got up to leave the room.

" Where are you going ?" asked the mother in surprise.

" To seek my master, madame."

" Wherefore, Jordaens ?"

" You shall soon know."

The youth was not long in reaching the tavern where the painter spent part of every evening, with a pipe in his

mouth, a mug of beer at his elbow, and a hand of cards between his fingers. Jordaens accosted him gayly. The great artist was flattered and pacified, and quietly listening to the plan which the youth unfolded, he answered with a wise shake of the head,

" Well, well, 'tis a smart boy ! thou hast settled matters so as to be friends with all. If another was to make such a proposition, I should say it was an artifice, but thou art incapable of this. Fiery and hot-tempered thou mayest be, but guileless as the dove. So, out of six days' work, three are for me and three for Rubens. Well, so be it, if it is only for the uniqueness of the proposal."

And filling up his great pewter tankard to the brim, the artist held it up with a mock-magisterial solemnity.

" *The king drinks !*" laughingly cried Jordaens.

" If it be the royalty of art which thou meanest," said Van Ort, " I accept the investiture. But what now," he said as he lowered his voice, and bent toward his pupil, and his friend, the magistrate Coppelt, with whom he had been playing cards, " what does that old man mean by staring at me so ? I don't like such wild faces. Do you know him, Coppelt ?"

" I do not, master."

" Nor thou, Jordaens ?"

" Neither do I."

But as he spoke, the youth turned half round, and examined the mysterious personage, whose gaze so disconcerted Van Ort.

" A fine head," he said, " and what a magnificent beard !"

There," cried Van Ort, " he admires every thing off-hand, young enthusiast ! For my part, the man's gaze makes me uneasy, I don't know why. His eyes have

never been off me since the moment I entered the tavern."

"Perhaps he is in need of help," responded Jordaens.

"I dare say," laughed the artist; "if he is an idler, let him beware of asking *me* for a stiver. I never give to beggars."

"Still, master——"

"Do not *thou* go and draw beggars on my shoulders. I hate vagabonds." We can not tell if any of these harsh words fell on the ear of the old man; but soon after they were spoken, he rose and, going to the further end of the room, seated himself at the lowest table. Van Ort once more breathed freely, like a man just delivered from an intolerable burden; but Jordaens, feeling an indescribable sympathy for the poor stranger, followed him with his eyes until he left the tavern.

## II.

### HAPPY DREAMS.

JORDAENS needed but a few years to become, in his turn a master. If Rubens had never been, Jordaens could have supplied his place in Flemish art. His manner was none the less exuberant, energetic, and inventive. Except the exquisite shades of manner, which he did not have the opportunity of studying in Italy, he had every quality which goes to build up a superior man and artist. No difficulty ever deterred him: a few days were enough for him to produce a finished and well-executed work of art. Foreign sovereigns knew his name and praised him, and though he himself said, "I am only the pupil of Rubens and Van Ort," yet the King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, had already given him an order for a series of twelve pictures, life-size, representing various scenes of the Passion of our Lord. He had now reached that happy stage of his career when every step is one forward, and leads to glory and fortune, when Rubens said to him one day,

"I am going to France, where Marie de' Medici, the queen, is going to receive my works, done in her honor and by her order. There will be some retouching needed, and I reckon upon thee as my friend and fellow-worker."

Jordaens bowed submissively. He was used to his

master's lordly manner, and never disputed his arrangements. But there was another person whom he loved and respected, and he went forth to seek the advice of Van Ort. As he was walking up the street in which the latter lived, he stopped with astonishment, as he recognized the old man who, a few years ago, had so troubled Van Ort at the tavern of the White Swan. He had hardly recovered from his surprise when the old man accosted him, taking off his hat and begging, with some shyness, to say a few words to him.

"Speak on," said Jordaens kindly, "Can I be of any use to you?"

"Certainly, sir. Could you allow me to sit to you as a model?"

"I shall be too happy. I could not find a better head than yours for some of the figures on which I am now at work. There might, however, be one drawback."

"What is it?" sadly asked the old man.

"I may have to start to-morrow for France. But," said the painter hurriedly, seeing the old man's sad looks, "I do not know as yet. I must ask my dear master Van Ort's advice; my purse shall be at your disposal, at any rate. May I ask you to go to my house and await me there?" Giving him his address, Jordaens left him and presented himself at his master's house. He found him with his wife and daughter.

"Ah!" said the artist, "how is my worthy pupil? I have fine news for you, my dear boy; nothing less than an order from the King of Sweden. If you go on as you have begun, you will soon go the rounds of every kingdom. I hope you are content now with your condescension in patiently following my school and listening to my

counsels. It is not your Rubens alone who could have led you so far and so successfully."

Jacques could not help smiling, though his mind was full. But a sigh soon escaped him, as the practical state of matters again struck him.

"I thank you warmly," he said, "for your good opinion of me. I have not forgotten my old debt of gratitude, and never shall, though I never can discharge it. Still, dear master, I beseech you be more just toward Rubens."

"Well, well, I know my own mind. But have you an object in your visit to-day? Have you any news to give me?"

Jacques answered with a certain confusion,

"Any news? Well, yes, dear master; Rubens is going to France, where Marie de' Medici has called him, and he says he needs me, and wishes me to go with him."

An outburst was nearly the result of this announcement; but Van Ort perceived that his daughter was trembling.

"O heavens!" he cried; "my child in tears? What is the matter? Catharine, my darling, tell me what it is. I won't have thee cry: I who never suffered thee to have a moment's pain."

Jordaens joined his solicitations to that of the painter.

"Mademoiselle, you distress me. I trust my words caused you no displeasure; you who are so good, and whom I honor so much?"

Catharine lifted her eyes to him and smiled.

"Go," she said, "and may God be with you, Monsieur Jordaens; and if you have to stay in France——"

"He stay in France!" cried Van Ort. "I forbid him to go!"

Jordaens gazed at him with a mingled look of aston-

ishment and submission, and said, "I came to seek your advice, master, and you know that I am too much in the habit of obeying you to resist your orders, even if they seemed to me contrary to my true interest."

"You hear, father," said Catharine. "It will be to Monsieur Jordaens's interest to go; give him your blessing and let him go."

"No, I say he shall not! Do you suppose, my dear boy, that I am a tyrant and want to keep you in Antwerp (proud as it is of your talent), without offering you some compensation?"

"Compensation, master! this to me!" murmured Jacques, trembling with emotion.

"By my beard! I believe he is beginning to understand me. Listen, then; my daughter is the most precious of all my possessions. I give her to you. Come, children, let me join your hands!"

The young people could not speak, but by a sudden impulse, they both fell on their knees before the old painter, who betrothed them in the sight of God.

It was a happy day. There were plans formed and dreams dreamed, and at night Van Ort said gayly to his wife,

"I don't care now, I have beaten Rubens. Jacques will stay with me, and I shall have a son."

Suddenly a thought struck Jordaens; the old man was waiting for him at his house.

"Good heavens!" he cried.

"What is the matter?" asked his friends.

"I had forgotten a poor old man who spoke to me in the street as I was coming here, and asked me to see him at my house."

"Well," said Van Ort, "you need not be so ready to put yourself out for the first vagrant you meet."

"Excuse me, father," said Jordaens, "but I fear that to neglect the poor old man would be but a bad omen for our future happiness."

Catharine joined her entreaties to those of her betrothed, who left hurriedly to attend to his mysterious visitor.

### III.

#### THE MODEL OF ST. PETER.

THE old man had not gone into Jordaens's house, but with shy discretion had seated himself on a bench by the door, and, his eyes mostly fixed on the pavement, patiently waited the artist's return.

"Excuse me," said Jacques, as he entered, "I have just left my master, where I was detained some time. Happiness made me forget every thing."

The old man's eyes glistened. "Happiness!" he echoed, "does it then exist on earth?"

"Why, yes, for him who fulfills his duties, and seeks first of all the satisfaction of a good conscience."

"You say well, sir!"

"Let us go in: you have been at the door only too long, my friend."

The young artist led his visitor into his studio, where were a few large sketches of the projected pictures of the Passion.

"Here," he said, "is a figure whom I have had occasion to paint several times—St. Peter; and you will be invaluable to me for this purpose."

"I am at your disposal, sir. How shall I sit?"

"Ah! I see you are not used to this work."

"No: this is the first time I have ever done it."

Jordaens looked with interest at his model, and, laying aside his pencil, took the old man's hands in his own.

"Really," he began, "I know not why you should stir

in me such interest, nor why I can not but hesitate in accepting you as a model. Be frank, and tell me who you are, and what painful circumstances have driven you to make a market of your venerable features. You will insult my artist's heart if you persist in refusing me your confidence."

"Your kindness emboldens me, sir," said the old man, drying his tears. "I have traveled in many lands, but have seldom met with a man like Jordaens. Your personal character is as high as your artistic merit; and since you require a full confession, I am ready to make it. I knew what riches were, but I knew it while yet too young, and, in my inexperience, I was drawn into inordinate luxury, ridiculous display, and treacherous companionship calling itself friendship, which ended in my becoming absolutely penniless. I had an elder and a wiser brother; but I scorned his advice, and rebelled against his remonstrances. His heart hardened toward me, and he refused to see me again. As he had foretold, I was soon a beggar. I knew not what to do. I had not learned the habits of honest labor. The government was pressing soldiers for the East-Indian wars: I enlisted and started. I need not detail my miseries in a foreign land, or burning clime, where I had neither friends nor resources. I became in turn a soldier, a sailor, a shop-keeper. As years and experience grew, I became as miserly as I had been extravagant. In my last occupation as a trader, I spared no effort to amass money, so as to retrieve myself in the eyes of my kindred; for it was that I had always in my thoughts, and for that I worked without intermission."

"Then you are not poor, as your appearance would lead one to believe?" said Jordaens in a buoyant tone.

"No thank God ; but I have donned this unpretending dress to avoid recognition here in Antwerp. The first time I came here, several years ago, I had only one wish, to see my brother. But this time, I shall not leave the city till my beloved brother has embraced and forgiven me."

"Good, and now, how can I be of use to you ?"

"Have you not guessed that the brother I speak of is no other than Adam Van Ort !"

"Heavens ! and you are the lost Samuel I have so often heard of ?"

"Yes ; then he has not forgotten me ?" said the old man, with a break in his voice. "Yet, no, sir," he continued sadly, "do not conceal any thing from me : this remembrance was a bitter one to him ?"

"I am afraid it was."

"Well, I thought so, and this was my plan. I meant to make you my confidant as soon as you should feel interested in me. This has been promptly evinced, thank God ! Then I thought I might rely on your generosity to plead my cause with my brother, who considers you as his best and favorite pupil."

"More than that now, his son."

"Is it possible ?"

"Yes ; and that was the happiness of which I spoke at first. But I would not be alone in my joy : I would that my entrance into the family of Van Ort might be the token of your perfect reconciliation with your kindred."

"But how can this be ?"

"I am thinking. My master is not the man to give up his crotchets easily. But I shall do my best and find out what can be done."

"It will be hard—do not think otherwise."

"I know it," said Jordaens warmly; "but where would be the merit if the thing were too easy?" Then, embracing the old man, he added, "My heart tells me we shall succeed. Fear nothing: I will be prudent. Avoid the presence of your brother, and come here to-morrow at the same hour. I shall have some news at least."

Jacques returned to his master's house, where he was anxiously expected.

"Look here," impatiently cried the father, "I like quick dealings. Let us celebrate the betrothal next Thursday, Twelfth-night, on the Feast of Epiphany. We will make a family gathering of it, and I reckon on my son-in-law-to support me."

Jordaens was delighted: his plan was already conceived. "I am too happy," he answered; "but I have a favor to ask."

"What is it? Speak! If it be at all feasible, it is already done."

"It is very feasible: only allow me to bring a friend of mine to our family gathering—a traveler."

Van Ort, frowning, said,

"Do you care particularly about it?"

"Very much, indeed."

"Well, well, have your way. Who is this traveler?"

"An excellent man; in every way worthy of your regard and interest."

"Ah! yes; those gadabouts always have such plausible stories to tell."

"This one, however, is honor itself, so frank and earnest."

"We shall see; but I always mistrust travelers."

## IV.

### "THE KING DRINKS!"

THURSDAY came, and a bountiful repast, superbly served, awaited the guests. Jordaens came with the old man, and the master, who recognized his friend of the White Swan, could not repress a momentary vexation. The old man, however, bowed gravely, and saluting his fellow-guests with a grateful gesture, said,

"I offer you a thousand heartfelt thanks that, on the word of the good Jordaens, you have allowed me to join your family gathering to-night."

"Yes, yes," grumbled Van Ort, "he would have it so. Let us have no ceremony."

"Is this the bride?" said the old man with strange interest; "may God bless her marriage!"

Van Ort would willingly have rejoined some harsh words, as he heard this gentle blessing; but he dared not, when he saw his daughter and Jordaens stand under the uplifted hand of the old man.

"Let us sit down," he cried. On the table, in the centre of a large dish, was the crown of silver gilt, to become the property of the *King of the Bean*. When dessert was served, the great Twelfth-cake was brought on.

"He! he! wait for me!" cried a grotesque voice. It was Toby Uriken, the *Fool of Antwerp*, a privileged person, who had the right of *entrée* into all houses at all hours. He wore a fantastic cap with horns. Van Ort, who liked

him, and laughed at his droll sayings, welcomed him with a smile.

"Come in, Toby: you shall have your share of the cake."

"So I reckoned," said the fool. "No feast is complete without Toby, especially at the painters' houses: they are a kind of cousin to me, you see. What fun if the bean fell to me!"

"Chance might humor thee," said Van Ort, laughing; "but whom would you choose for queen?"

"Why, a thousand thunders! Catharine, to be sure."

"Nothing less, eh? Now what would you give her?"

"Two ounces of patience, to begin housekeeping on."

A loud laugh followed this sally. The old man alone was grave and silent. Van Ort eyed him anxiously. Toby also looked at him fixedly.

"So!" he cried, "here is an ancestor of yours with whom I am not acquainted! Is he an ambassador of the Great Mogul, or a Jew from Amsterdam, or a distinguished member of the family?"

"You may have hit upon the truth at last, my friend," quietly said the old man. Van Ort trembled, and Jordaens was on thorns.

"Who has the bean?" noisily asked the fool. "What a pity I have not! But I shall console myself by drinking his majesty's health. Who has the bean?"

"I have," said the old man. He held it up to the company, while Jordaens, Catharine, and dame Van Ort all heartily congratulated him. He took the crown, solemnly placed it on his head, and held out his glass to be filled.

"*The king drinks!*" cried the guests.

"Who's your queen?" said Jordaens, smiling.

The old man pointed to Catharine.

"Well, since you have dethroned me," said the fool, "what present will you make to your queen?"

"My dearest love."

"Oh! that is worth very little."

"And besides—"

Then drawing from the ample pocket of his surcoat a thick pocket-book, full of paper representing vast sums, the old man opened it and held it out toward Jacques.

"My son," said he, "here is the present of the King of the Bean to the bride. Take this bill of friendship. I know that you will make good use of it. He whose name is in all mouths, and who is known through all Europe, is as worthy of fortune as he is of renown. As for me, I must leave you: I am content, for I have gained my end. Catharine Jordaens, do not forget Samuel Van Ort in your prayers."

"Samuel!" cried all those present. The artist was at first irresolute; but his pride was not proof against this touching scene, and his coldness melted away in a moment. He rose, and threw himself in his brother's arms.

"My poor brother!—To the devil with all foolish grudges."

Catharine hung on her uncle's neck.

"Thanks, Jacques," said Van Ort, "in thee I find a son, and through thee a brother."

But as question piled itself on question, the poor fool of Antwerp, feeling himself defrauded of his supper, cried out impatiently,

"Well, now, suppose we sit down again: emotion dries up the throat."

"He is right," said Jordaens, with a laugh. "Never mind, Toby, I will paint a picture of our family gathering, and you shall not be forgotten."

"Bravo! so I am sure to be known for all ages to come."

Samuel resumed his place, and holding his glass to a servant to be filled, he lifted it to his lips, while the guests cried out again with a voice of glee and joy,

"*The king drinks!*"

"*The king drinks!*" said Jordaens thoughtfully; "yes, that shall be the name of my picture!"



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